

# Double Marginalisation: An Uncharted Struggle for Identity

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## Abstract

Refugees encounter significant obstacles due to forced displacement which includes losing their homes, jobs, and social networks. They often face difficulties integrating into their host countries, grappling with cultural differences and employment challenges, and frequently experience systemic exclusion. Among these refugees, families with members with disability endure even more severe difficulties such as limited mobility, insufficient healthcare, and societal stigma. These additional challenges not only hinder their autonomy but also alter family dynamics, placing considerable pressure on caregivers and exacerbating their marginalisation. This study used Cognitive Dissonance Theory and Transactional Analysis to investigate the psychological and social challenges faced by refugees with disability. The novel *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019) is a key text in this examination, portraying the compounded difficulties of refugee families through the character of Afra, who is blind. However, the research does not use empirical field studies or cross-cultural data across multiple refugee populations, and its scope is restricted to fictional representation within a single novel. This study highlights the critical need for inclusive refugee policies that acknowledge the specific vulnerabilities of disabled individuals. By addressing these inequalities, humanitarian initiatives can promote accessibility, independence, and dignity, leading to a more just and compassionate approach to refugee crisis.

**Keywords:** Displacement, Disability, Caregiving, Trauma, Double Marginalisation, Social Exclusion, Family Dynamics.

## Introduction

The global refugee crisis has become one of the most devastating humanitarian disasters of modern times. Every year, millions of people in other countries are forced to flee their homes due to violence, persecution, and natural catastrophes seeking refuge. This is laden with grief about loss and difficulties in adjusting to new surroundings. Most refugees have been displaced for many years, and the total number of refugees under the UNHCR's mandate reached 37.4 million by the end of 2023, up 2.7 million (+8%) from the previous year (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2023", 2023). According to the World Bank's World Development Report 2023, approximately 184 million people, or 2.3 percent of the global population, live outside their country of nationality, including 37 million refugees (World Bank, "World Development Report 2023: Migrants, Refugees and Societies", 2023). Refugees with disability often experience "double marginalisation, facing two layers of discrimination and hardship. Common struggles with displacement as refugees involve various bureaucracies in the process of acquiring refugee status, accessing diverse services, and overcoming prejudice. Furthermore, their disability presents new challenges such as limited access to healthcare, assistive devices, and rehabilitation facilities in refugee camps and host communities.

Education is hardly available, as schools in displacement settings frequently do not have the necessary facilities or trained staff to support children with disability.

According to UNICEF, there are nearly 240 million children with disability worldwide, and at the end of 2021, an estimated 36.5 million children were displaced due to conflict, violence, or other crises (UNICEF, “A Brighter Future for Migrant and Displaced Children with Disability: The First Step is Better Data”, 2023). People with disability face significant challenges; 38% of people with disability have never attended school, and 87% are unemployed. These barriers exacerbate financial dependency on family members or aid organisations, diminishing autonomy and increasing vulnerability to exploitation (Humanity & Inclusion (HI) and iMAP, “The good and promising practices on disability inclusive humanitarian action”, 2023). Studies among Syrian refugees found that 24.7% of participants reported having a disability. Men with disability were significantly less likely to find paid employment compared to their peers without disability which led to greater financial hardship. Additionally, people with disability in a family often face extra caregiving demands which increase emotional stress and economic strain (PubMed, “Disability prevalence and access to services among Syrian refugees in Sultanbeyli, Istanbul”, 2021). Refugee literature often dives deep into themes such as trauma, loss, and adaptation, but tends to miss out on the unique challenges faced by refugees with disability. This study shines a light on how Christy Lefteri’s *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* captures the psychological and emotional hurdles encountered by a disabled refugee, particularly through the character of Afra. There’s a noticeable gap in current literary criticism when it comes to addressing disability in refugee stories, especially regarding the psychological stress and caregiving dynamics involved.

## Review of Literature

According to Sarah Calvert in her article, “Challenges for People with Disability” (Sarah Calvert, “Challenges for People with Disability”, Ballard Brief, 2021) the mental health and the physical health of the People with Disability were

described. It states that in a survey conducted among over 13,000 Students from 22 different colleges, nearly 12% of students reported having ADHD, almost 4% had a learning disability, 2% reported hearing disability and 2% had vision impairment. The article “Refugee Families with Children with Disability: Exploring their social Network and Support Needs” by Edvina Besic ( Edvina Besic’s, “Refugee Families with Children with Disability: Exploring their social Network and Support Needs” vol 5,2020) explores the mentality of the Caregivers in the Refuge with Disability family and also attempts to show the positive side of the people with Disability and other NGOs with the help from UNHCR.

## Christy Lefteri: A Storyteller of Refugee Resilience

Christy Lefteri, a British-Cypriot author, is renowned for her empathetic and evocative storytelling, often exploring themes of displacement, war and human resilience. Influenced by her heritage as the daughter of Cypriot refugees and her volunteer experiences in refugee camps, Lefteri delves deeply into the struggles of refugees and displaced individuals. Her writing highlights the psychological and emotional toll of trauma, dynamics of family relationships under strain, and resilience of the human spirit. Her works, including *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019) and *Songbirds* (2021), align strongly with studies exploring the challenges faced by refugee households and individuals with disability. Lefteri’s portrayal of characters grappling with trauma and family tensions reflects the complexities of displacement which offers profound insights into adaptation and resilience. Her novel *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019) has garnered significant critical acclaim. In 2020, it won the Aspen Words Literary Prize, an award recognising fiction that illuminates vital contemporary issues. Esmeralda Santiago, head judge for the prize, remarked on the novel’s profound impact, stating, “We see wars on our screens and cross paths with the survivors in new lives in our neighborhoods, but we don’t see them. Lefteri brings us closer so we can, without fear” (Colin Dwyer, “The Beekeeper of Aleppo’ Wins 2020 Aspen Words Literary Prize”, 2020). Additionally, the novel was

a runner-up for the Dayton Literary Peace Prize, which celebrates literature that promotes peace and understanding (Dayton Literary Peace Prize n.d.). These accolades underscore Lefteri's exceptional ability to craft narratives that delve into themes of displacement and resilience, effectively highlighting the human costs of *Aleppo* (2019), Christy Lefteri sensitively explores the complex realities faced by refugees with disability and their families by emphasizing the profound emotional and physical impacts of displacement. The character of a refugee, Afra who becomes blind due to a bomb explosion serves as a focal point for examining the frequently neglected obstacles encountered by refugees with disability. The challenges range from the practical issues of navigating new and often inaccessible surroundings to the emotional burden of being unable to interact with the world as they once did. Afra's loss of sight was compounded by the trauma of their son Sami's death which significantly influences her relationship with Nuri. As Afra's primary caregiver, Nuri grapples with the dual pressures of managing her needs and coping with his own grief. Relentless movement through refugee camps and the unpredictability of their situations intensify these challenges. Nevertheless, the narrative reveals the resilience that arises from these profound connections. Nuri's unwavering commitment to Afra despite his personal anguish, along with their deep affection for each other exemplifies the enduring power of human relationships even in the most dire circumstances. *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019) finally reveals that survival is not just the escape from violence but also survival from the psychological and emotional war wounds. It draws attention to the invisible struggle of refugees with disability and the huge toll on family structures which offers a strong reminder of quiet strength in love and support even when facing the most daunting adversities.

### **Psychological Dissonance and Self-Displacement**

Cognitive dissonance theory offers a useful framework for analysing *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019) and the psychological conflicts of its characters. The theory was proposed by Leon Festinger in his book *The Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (1957) which examines main elements like dissonant

thoughts, the emotional tension they create and the attempts to alleviate this tension are essential for examining the internal conflict experienced by Nuri and Afra. This tension emphasises the difficulties of holding fast-to-deeply ingrained values in the face of the complexities of survival and adaptation. Using the elements of cognitive dissonance theory brings both the individual conflicts of the characters and the wider psychological effects of displacement into focus, by providing a richer understanding of the themes of the novel.

Conflict emerges when individuals experience psychological distress stemming from conflicting emotions or beliefs. For Afra, a refugee with a disability, her challenges extend beyond the internal; they are intricately linked to her physical limitations. Her blindness, resulting from the bombing, exacerbated her displacement and amplified her traumatic experiences. Unlike Nuri, who retains a certain level of independence, Afra is entirely dependent on him which diminishes her control over her own journey. Her internal struggle is poignantly captured in her words: "If we stay, we'll die" (Lefteri 44), illustrating her conflict between honouring her son's memory in Aleppo and the grim reality that remaining would lead to death. In contrast to other refugees, who can make choices about their survival, blindness robs her agency and heightens her sense of detachment. Her disability serves as a symbol of her disconnection from the present and tethering her to the past. Amid the chaos of displacement, she not only suffers but also becomes voiceless and overlooked in a society that prioritises survival, yet fails to offer meaningful support to those who are already marginalised. This scenario exemplifies double marginalisation where Afra endures compounded exclusion due to her status as a refugee and her disability.

Similarly, Nuri confronts his own cognitive dissonance. He reflects, "Part of me wished I could kill her with those kisses, put her to sleep forever" (Lefteri 95), revealing his internal conflict between his love and commitment to Afra and the pain of witnessing her suffering. Nuri finds himself torn between his instinct to protect her and the sorrow of watching her endure relentless hardship. This mirrors the real-life struggles of caregivers, as shared

in *The Cut*, where one caregiver admits, “I was so tired, so overwhelmed, and felt so guilty for wanting my life back.” Similarly, both Afra and Nuri wrestle with the emotional toll of their situation, balancing love, grief and the harsh demands of survival (Paula Aceves and David Mack, “Caregiver Confessions: How Much More Can We Take?” Eleven people who care for aging and sick relatives share their fears, resentments, and guilt (*The Cut*, 2025).

Resolution involves an individual’s effort to ease psychological tension arising from conflicting thoughts or emotions by seeking a way to harmonise or reconcile them. Afra’s restoration of her eyesight represents a crucial turning point, yet it does not diminish the hardships she faced as a refugee with visual impairment coping with displacement. When she joyfully declares, “I can see the green of the tree’ (Lefteri 358), it signifies not merely the return of her vision, but also the resurgence of her agency. Unlike her previous state of complete reliance on Nuri, she once again began to assert control over her life. However, this change is not without its challenges. Her blindness isolated her and made her invisible in a society that often prioritised survival over the needs of refugees with disability. Her battle was not solely about mourning her past but about existing in an environment where she lacked independence and was treated as someone to be supported rather than as an individual capable of moving forward on her own. The recovery of her sight represents more than just a physical restoration; it embodies her struggle to be recognised, validated, and transcends the role of a burden in a system that frequently overlooks disabled refugees.

Afra’s journey is not merely one of healing; it is a demonstration that refugees with disability can reclaim their autonomy despite the barriers they face. This resonates with Wong’s (2010) observation that “Healing and recovery can be a long and daunting uphill battle, but the struggle is never in vain” (Wong, P. T. P. “Meaning therapy: An integrative and positive existential psychology,” *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*, 2010). Unlike those who benefit from stable surroundings during their recovery, Afra must navigate her healing amidst the turmoil of displacement by illustrating that resilience encompasses not only endurance but also the reclamation of one’s own story. Her restored vision

is not a miraculous event; it stands as a testament to the fortitude of refugees with disability who, despite being marginalised, refuse to remain invisible.

The concept of dissonance magnitude pertains to the extent of discomfort that individuals encounter when simultaneously holding two contradictory beliefs, emotions, or actions. This dissonance frequently results in psychological distress, emotional repression, or alterations in behaviour as individuals strive to alleviate their psychological unease. Afra’s emotional and psychological turmoil is vividly expressed in her desperate request, “Can you take me to the doctor? Because the pain is unbearable” (Lefteri 2). This plea encapsulates her internal struggle, in which the physical pain from her injuries is intricately linked to the deep grief of losing her son. Afra yearns for healing, a return to normalcy and a glimmer of hope. However, these desires are strongly opposed by the relentless suffering and trauma they endure. Her blindness acts as a persistent reminder of the war’s destruction, intensifying her internal conflicts.

Afra’s situation underscores the concept of double marginalisation as she is not only marginalised as a refugee but also faces additional obstacles due to her disability. She becomes trapped in a cycle where her hopes for recovery clash with the constant reminders of her pain, resulting in a significant psychological burden. This tension between her wish to heal and the harsh realities of her circumstances illustrates her emotional distress, revealing the complexities of navigating both physical and emotional suffering in the aftermath of the trauma. This experience resonates with findings from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN), which highlights that refugees, particularly children, endure significant psychological and physical trauma from war or persecution and often face increased dissonance as they attempt to align their past experiences with their current realities (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, “Refugee Trauma”, 2024).

Festinger identified several paradigms of dissonance that elucidate the emergence and manifestation of psychological discomfort in various contexts. These paradigms encompass belief disconfirmation, induced compliance, free

choice, and justifying effort. The concept of belief disconfirmation is particularly significant in scenarios in which new information directly contradicts an individual's established worldview or assumptions. When faced with such contradictory information, individuals frequently encounter intense cognitive dissonance, as they strive to reconcile new data with their pre-existing beliefs. Afra's statement, "I thought you'd never bring me a gift again" (Lefteri 106), poignantly illustrates the profound emotional impact of her blindness as a refugee with a disability. Unlike others who can navigate new environments, Afra finds herself in a state of total reliance, where even the simplest acts serve as reminders of her significant losses. Her blindness transcends mere physical limitations; it robs her of independence, dignity, and the capacity to interact with the world on her own terms. As a refugee with disability, she endures an additional layer of struggle where survival involves not only escaping peril but also confronting the emotional weight of being viewed as powerless. The loss of her vision compels her to face the harsh truth that she can no longer regain the liberty that once characterised her life, and her relationships may be irrevocably transformed by her need for support. Her battle is not solely about adaptation; it is also about resisting the erasure of her identity and demonstrating that she is more than just a burden in a society that frequently neglects the plight of disabled refugees.

Induced compliance refers to a phenomenon in which individuals are driven to behave in ways that conflict with their true beliefs or feelings, often due to external influences or situations. This compelled behaviour leads to internal conflict, as individuals struggle to align their actions with their genuine emotions. Over time, they may seek to alleviate this discomfort by modifying their beliefs or justifying their behaviours. In *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019), the statement, "We hadn't made love since Sami died" (Lefteri 43), poignantly highlights Afra's deep emotional and physical withdrawal—not only from Nuri but from life itself. As a refugee living with a disability, Afra's grief is exacerbated by her blindness which heightens her sense of separation and amplifies the emotional divide between her husband and her. Unlike other refugees, who

may still navigate their trauma physically, Afra is engulfed in darkness and unable to visually engage with her surroundings which makes intimacy an even more formidable challenge. Her blindness deepens her feelings of detachment and hinders her ability to seek or offer comfort, as she once did. The loss of Sami, coupled with the trauma of war, has not only devastated her emotionally, but has also instilled a sense of powerlessness and the unworthiness of love between her and Nuri. This situation transcends mere physical separation, embodying the profound emotional gulf created by her grief, disability, and displacement.

Research, conducted by Festinger and Carlsmith in 1959, known as *Cognitive Consequences of Forced Compliance*, explored the phenomenon of induced compliance. In this study, the participants performed tedious tasks and were subsequently asked to convince others that these tasks were enjoyable. Participants were divided into two groups, with one receiving \$1 and the other \$20 for their persuasive efforts. Notably, those who received only \$1 rated the tasks as more enjoyable compared to their counterparts who were paid \$20. The researchers inferred that the minimal external incentive of \$1 prompted participants to rationalise their actions internally by changing their attitudes, thus alleviating cognitive dissonance. This research highlights how external influences can compel individuals to modify their internal beliefs to be consistent with their behaviours (*cognitive consequences of forced compliance*, all-out-psychology). Com, 2016). Afra's experience parallels this concept, as the conditions of war, forced migration and disability push her into a state where she must reshape her internal reality to cope with the external suffering she endures.

The free-choice paradigm illustrates the psychological unease individuals experience when faced with two equally attractive options. This unease, referred to as post-decision dissonance, often drives individuals to justify their selections by highlighting the advantages of the chosen alternative, while downplaying the merits of the option they did not select. In *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019), as a refugee with a disability, Afra grapples with profound dissonance regarding her sense of volition following the traumatic loss of sight. Unlike other refugees,



who can visually navigate their circumstances, Afra finds herself in a grave frame of mind which amplifies her feelings of helplessness. She faced the daunting dilemma of confronting the harsh realities of the refugee camp or retreating into her own mind, where she could momentarily escape the pain of her loss. This internal struggle is poignantly illustrated when she expresses, “I don’t want to be out in this world” (Lefteri 60), highlighting her difficulty in engaging with a world that has become alien to her, due to her blindness. The refugee experience inherently involves displacement and erasure, but for Afra, her blindness exacerbates her sense of exclusion, leaving her feeling estranged from both her environment and identity.

Research conducted by Tali Sharot et al. (2009), titled *How Choice Reveals and Shapes Expected Hedonic Outcome*, sheds light on how decision-making under pressure forces individuals to reframe their experiences to cope with distress. This study suggests that people often emphasise the positives of their choices to lessen dissonance (Sharot, De Martino, & Dolan, R. J, *How choice reveals and shapes expected hedonic outcomes. The Journal of Neuroscience*, 2009). Afra’s attempt to hold onto her identity as an artist reflects this psychological coping mechanism—despite losing her ability to see, she clings to what remains of her artistry through touch and memory.

Cognitive dissonance theory posits that the amount of effort invested in a task is positively correlated with the perceived value of the reward obtained. This phenomenon is known as effort justification (Festinger, L, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, p. 3, 1957). Individuals often experience discomfort as a result of the effort they expend, leading them to enhance the perceived value of the outcome to alleviate this discomfort. Consequently, a higher level of effort necessitates that the resulting reward appear more significant, thereby mitigating the cognitive dissonance associated with the arduous process. In *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019), Afra’s statement, “I want you to lock me in” (Lefteri 321), reveals the profound vulnerability she faces as a refugee with disability. Her plea transcends the mere desire for solitude, and it is a desperate attempt to establish a secure space where she can feel shielded

from the unpredictable and often hostile conditions of refugee life. As a refugee with disability, Afra confronts double marginalisation: she must not only survive the ordeal of displacement but also cope with the added difficulty of being unable to physically protect herself or flee when necessary. The psychological trauma stemming from her blindness was intensified by the horrors of the war, leaving her feeling vulnerable and helpless. Her wish to be confined underscores the deep-seated fear that her disability has instilled in her, and highlights the harsh reality that refugees with disability face significantly greater challenges in achieving independence and safety during displacement.

Afra’s choice to withdraw into seclusion illustrates how refugees with disability frequently adopt extreme coping strategies in response to their situations. Research conducted by Jones et al. (2020) indicate that individuals tend to assign greater significance to outcomes achieved through struggle, a concept that resonates with Afra’s actions. In her case, self-imposed isolation becomes a survival strategy which symbolises her attempt to reclaim a fragment of security in an unfamiliar world that does not accommodate her needs (Jones, E. H., et al. “The Effect of Perceived Effort on Reward Valuation: Taking the Reward Positivity (RewP) to Dissonance Theory”, 2020).

### **Role Reversals and Emotional Turmoil**

Transactional Analysis (TA), a psychological theory formulated by Eric Berne in his book *Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy* (1961), investigates the dynamics of human interactions and behaviours through three fundamental ego states: Parent, Adult and Child. Each of these states embodies unique patterns of thoughts, emotions, and actions. The Adult ego state is characterised by its capacity for rational, objective reasoning, and its focus on processing information based on the present context rather than being swayed by historical experiences or emotional reactions. Afra’s actions in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019) exemplify the psychological turmoil experienced by a refugee with disability as she confronts the daunting obstacles of displacement and blindness through both her Child and Adult ego state. Her statement, “I’m wearing the

perfume” (Lefteri 66), signifies her Child ego state’s urgent desire to reclaim fragments of her previous existence. For a woman who has endured the loss of sight and home, the seemingly simple act of applying perfume transcends mere comfort; it serves as a form of resistance against the obliteration of her identity. Her disability robbed her of her true self and thrust her into an alien environment where dependence on others became essential for survival. The act of wearing a perfume symbolises her effort to maintain a sense of normalcy and femininity in a reality that increasingly undermines her sense of herself. Nevertheless, this yearning for past comfort cannot protect her from the harsh truths she encounters, as her blindness places her in an even more vulnerable position within the refugee experience, where such vulnerability can be a matter of life or death.

Afra’s remark, “I can feel the pencil marks on the paper” (Lefteri 181), illustrates her Adult Ego state as she strives to adapt to her visual impairment. This instance highlights the distinct challenges that refugees with disability encounter facing double marginalisation as they seek to reclaim elements of their identity in a society that often overlooks their needs. In contrast to able-bodied refugees, Afra faces a compounded loss—both displacement and disability—necessitating a reliance on resilience and adaptability that may not be as pronounced as in others. Her experience resonates with Zannou’s perspective that the Adult Ego state is essential for managing intense emotions and coping with difficult situations (Zannou, “Transactional Analysis: Understanding Ego States in Therapy”, 2021). For Afra, the Adult Ego state becomes a means of survival and enables her to piece together parts of her former identity while confronting the brutal realities of being a refugee with disability. However, her dependence on the child ego state also highlights the emotional burden of her condition, as she seeks comfort in small pleasures to mitigate the significant challenges she faces.

Life Script denotes the unconscious framework or narrative that individuals construct primarily during their formative years and is shaped by early experiences, caregiver interactions, and pivotal life events. These scripts significantly influence fundamental beliefs regarding self-

identity, interpersonal relationships, and future expectations which often operate below the level of conscious awareness. Afra’s narrative as a refugee with disability is significantly influenced by her traumatic past which solidifies her conviction that love inevitably leads to loss. Her remark to Nuri, “You know, if we love something it will be taken away” (Lefteri 43), underscores the psychological weight of her displacement and disability, where the anguish of losing her son is exacerbated by the erosion of her independence and sense of self. As a refugee with visual impairment, Afra encounters a heightened level of difficulty navigating a world that is unfamiliar and has to hinge on the support of others. This sense of vulnerability deepens her fatalistic perspective, hindering her ability to believe in the potential to rebuild her life.

Afra’s narrative is intricately linked to her identity as an artist, a crucial element of her self-image that is profoundly affected by her blindness. Her statement, “I was an artist” (Lefteri 158), underscores the profound consequences of her disability which compels her to face a self-concept that is no longer in harmony with her current situation. The deprivation of her artistic skills reflects the broader loss of self-determination experienced by refugees with disability, who often find themselves reliant on others in settings that seldom meet their needs. Her commitment to continue drawing despite her visual impairment represents her fight to regain control of her identity. This struggle emphasises the distinct challenges faced by refugees with disability, whose attempts to adapt encompass not only survival but also the preservation of their essential identities in a world that persistently tests their self-conception.

Interpersonal effectiveness encompasses the capacity to engage and communicate with others in a manner that is clear, respectful, and conducive to achieving positive, productive results. It includes the essential skills for articulating one’s needs, establishing boundaries, and managing relationships, while fostering healthy interactions and minimising conflict. The relationship between Nuri and Afra is significantly influenced by the distinct challenges Afra encounters as a refugee living with a disability, which complicate their communication and emotional intimacy. Afra’s reliance on Nuri is

poignantly illustrated in her statement, “I don’t want the key, I want you to keep hold of it” (Lefteri 321). This expression not only reveals her desire for safety but also highlights the loss of independence that her visual impairment entails. In contrast to able-bodied refugees, who may maintain some degree of physical power despite their circumstances, Afra is compelled to depend on Nuri for both safety and guidance. This situation reinforces a Parent-Child dynamic in their relationship as Afra’s vulnerability drives her to seek comfort from Nuri’s more mature perspective thereby revealing the emotional tension that exists between them.

Nuri expresses regret, stating, “I’m sorry I forgot the key” (Lefteri 354). While this apology may seem insignificant, it highlights the profound consequences of miscommunication under precarious circumstances. For Afra, the failure to lock the door is not just a minor inconvenience; it directly threatens her safety as a visually impaired refugee in a dangerous setting. This anxiety tragically culminates in her assault by the smuggler, emphasising the heightened risks faced by refugees with disability, particularly women, who are more susceptible to exploitation and violence. Unlike Nuri, who can physically confront threats, Afra’s blindness renders her defenseless and intensifies her sense of vulnerability. This situation illustrates dual marginalisation as Afra is marginalised not only as a refugee but also as a person with a disability which further complicates her fight for survival and safety in an already hostile environment.

## Conclusion

*The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019) emphasises the multifaceted challenges faced by refugee families, particularly those with members who have disability, as illustrated by Afra’s blindness. This condition exacerbated her individual trauma and amplified the shared difficulties of displacement, resulting in emotional isolation, financial hardship, and reliance on external assistance. Nuri’s shift from being a husband to a caregiver highlights the significant pressure on families in these situations, as they confront limited access to healthcare, scarce job opportunities and social marginalization. Nevertheless, Afra’s experience embodies resilience,

showing the importance of external support networks and personal fortitude in overcoming challenges.

This study emphasises the critical necessity for inclusive refugee policies that cater to the specific challenges encountered by individuals with disability. In contrast to other refugee families who may grapple with integration and employment yet maintain a degree of agency, families with members with disability encounter additional obstacles, such as restricted mobility, insufficient healthcare, and societal stigma which significantly limit their independence. Tackling this inequality is not just a matter of compassion; it is a fundamental requirement for a truly fair and humane approach to the refugee crisis, particularly for refugees with disability. Further research could include comparative literary assessments of refugee characters with disability from various cultural contexts to uncover repeating trends and contrasting depictions. Interdisciplinary collaboration across literary, disability, and refugee studies can broaden our understanding and provide nuanced insights into marginalised situations. Furthermore, incorporating actual data on caregiving in displaced communities may contribute to more accurate literary renderings. Exploring works written by people who have lived through disability and displacement can provide valuable insights into identity, resilience, and narrative agency.

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