

Bon Voyage: A Peer Reviewed Journal of English Studies

[Open Access Journal; Indexed in NepJOL]

ISSN: 2382-5308 (Print); Published by Department of English,
Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu
Nepalhttp://ejournals.rrcampus.edu.np/ejournals/bonvoyage/

The Politics of Displacement of Refugees in Habiburrahman's Novel *First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks*

Alok Lamsal

Adjunct Faculty

Department of English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal
Email: lamsalalok@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/bovo.v5i1.64363>

Page 1-13

Abstract

This paper explores mainly three phases of displacement experienced by refugees in Habiburrahman's book *First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks* and potential solutions to address the challenges they face. Deriving from Beverly Crawford's concept that "refugees live three lives," which has been quoted in the book written by Alan Gratz-Refugee, the paper examines the distinct experiences of refugees as they flee from their homeland, seek refuge in another place or country, and establish lives in foreign lands. Using the plight of Rohingya refugees in refugee camps as a reference point from the book, the paper argues that each phase of displacement dispenses with exclusive challenges and insecurities for refugees. The paper also discusses the role of theories in highlighting the problems and giving possible solutions to those complications of displacement. Additionally, the paper comprehends various insights from different philosophers and theorists on the topic of refugee displacement, providing a theoretical framework to address this global issue through a novel. Ultimately, the paper aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of refugees in the book "...A Rohingya Speaks" and to propose possible implications to help refugees rebuild their lives after various phases of displacement.

Keywords: *refugee, displacement, Rohingya, Homo Sacer, hospitality*

Introduction

In this paper, I would like to discuss the lives of refugees in three different phases. In relation to the discussion of the displacements, I would like to put forth some possible solutions to the problems of displacement. Professor Beverly Crawford has written that "refugees live three lives" (Gratz 168). These three lives are the three different displacements refugees had to face. "The first is spent escaping the horrors of whatever has driven them from their homes" (168). This particular horror is being faced by Rohingya refugees in their respective refugee camps. The second phase of displacement happens "in their search of refuge" (168). This is also equally dangerous for them since they had to pass through spine-chilling hurdles, as we can read in this novel. If refugees survive this path, then they move into the third displacement. This is a new beginning in a completely new nation. They do not follow any of their customs, rituals, or traditions. They are also unknown about their living styles and religion. While talking about these displacements, I will provide references from the novel, and I will theorize by taking references from different philosophers and theorists about the displacement of refugees from their places.

Background of the Novel

First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks is a novel that speaks out against the oppression of the Rohingya community in Myanmar. "I am three years old and am effectively erased from existence. I become a foreigner to my neighbors: they believe that we are Bengali invaders who have entered their country illegally and now threaten to overrun it" (Habiburrahman 10). This particular belief among the Burmese wreaked havoc within the Rohingya community. This novel is a chilling memoir of the narrator who escaped from the death zone. Habiburrahman grew up in a tiny town in western Burma, where he was born in 1979. "The country's military chief claimed when he was three years old that his people, the Rohingya, were not one of the 135 recognized ethnic groups that made up the eight 'national races'" (Bhardwaj). He explains that "with the stroke of a pen, our ethnic group officially disappears" (10) Across Myanmar "an outlandish tale takes root by firesides in thatched huts" (10). "They say that because of our physical appearance, we are evil ogres from a faraway land, more animal than human. This image persists, haunting the thoughts of adults and the nightmares of children" (10). From the mid-twentieth century to the early 2010's the groundwork was insidiously laid, paving the way for a broader campaign of genocide.

First Phase of Displacement (Problem)

This first phase of displacement is particularly within the community or the country. A law was enacted and forced on the citizens of Myanmar. "To retain Burmese citizenship, you must belong to one of the 135 recognized ethnic groups, which form part of eight

The Politics of Displacement of Refugees in Habiburrahman's Novel *First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks*

national races" (Habiburrahman 10). This law directly outcasted the Rohingyas from their homeland. History claims that the ancestors of the present-day Rohingya have been staying there since 1000 AD. "During the reign of the Burmese King Mahato Tsandaya (788-810 CE) several Arab ships were wrecked off the coast of the Rambi Islands and sailors were rescued from the shore" (Bari 13). These landed people were taken to the King and he allotted some land for them to settle down. These early Arab settlers were inspired by Islam's message of universalism; henceforth, some native people might have accepted Islam during this period. Min Saw-Mun made some agreements with some of the Sultan kings. "He used Muslim titles with the court emblem inscribed with the Islamic Kalimah and used Persian as the court language" (14). There is no concrete proof that the Buddhists who lived in this land (Myanmar) converted to Islam, "but their voluntary practice of adopting Muslim names continued for more than two hundred years" (14). Some historians have argued why Arakanese Kings and people adopted Muslim names. According to Bari in his book, *Rohingya Crisis: People Facing Extinction* writes, "The likely explanation is Muslims were probably seen as culturally more sophisticated during that period." (33).

Despite a long history of collaboration between diverse ethnic and religious groups in Arakan, the military has been involved in efforts to "cleanse" (52) Myanmar of "Bengali invaders," (52) a euphemism for the Rohingya, for the past sixty years. "Pure Gold," (53) "Purify and Whiten like the Jasmine Flower," and "Clean and Beautiful Nation" (53) are among the operations listed by Habib, who defines them as manhunts, massacres with lyrical, imaginative, warlike names that give honor to those who conduct them. The Rohingyas have been arrested for arbitrary reasons and are tortured, raped, and killed by the militaries as well as by the neighbors. "Their denial of a place in society would manifest in the most insidious form, leaving them stateless, beyond the scope of law and justice, and the object of widespread resentment" (Wade 51)

All these historical facts come into existence that assure Rohingya's existence in today's Myanmar. So, following these historical facts, Rohingya had all their rights to stay in this land. However, they have been treated as foreigners in their homeland. Habib writes that in the novel that even when he was three years old his existence was erased. "I become a foreigner to my neighbors; they believe that we are Bengali invaders who have entered their country illegally and now threaten to overrun it" (Habiburrahman 11). Now, this idea of displacement can be linked with Agamben's Idea of "State of Exception". Rohingyas are trapped inside refugee camps and are thoroughly tortured, raped, and brutally killed. In their homeland they are excluded, which means they are in a state of exception. They are an outcast who are living in camps and are suffering from extreme exclusion from the nation. "In this sense, the camps have become 'spaces of exception'. Residents live in a 'zone of indistinction between outside and inside, exception and rule, licit and illicit, in which the very concepts of subjective right and juridical protection no longer make any Sense" (14).

The Politics of Displacement of Refugees in Habiburrahman's Novel *First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks*

“Thousands of Rohingya died in the bloody summer of 2012. It was the start of five long years of uninterrupted genocide, during which Arakan State became a killing field” (167). This mass killing of a particular community exposes the intention of the state. In the words of Agamben, the state sees these people as a “bare life” (Agamben 5). According to Agamben bare life is “the life of homo sacer (sacred man), who may be killed yet not sacrificed” (6). Homo Sacer is a kind of ambivalence and the reason that there’s an ambivalence is because “Sacer” (6) literally can refer to sacred, and when we think of sacred we probably think someone who’s exalted may be held in high esteem. However, Agamben uses this term in a negative light. This means that someone who was seen as sacred and clean can also be observed as filthy. Henceforth, these people can be ostracized from the political order. This image of dirtiness or filthiness projects that the refugees are someone who has to be excluded. “The living being has logos by taking away and conserving its own voice in it, even as it dwells in the polis by letting its own bare life be excluded, as an exception, within it” (6).

Sari Hanafi, while showing the situation of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, she writes, “The paradox of the Palestinians in Lebanon today is that they are ‘excluded from rights while being included in law-making. They may enjoy neither the rights of the Lebanese, upon whose territory they reside, nor even those of the foreigner in Lebanon ‘ (Hanafi 13). A similar situation is being faced by Rohingyas in this memoir. Their existence is only to exercise the power of the government. They are an outcast who are living in camps and are suffering from extreme exclusion from the nation. “In this sense, the camps have become ‘spaces of exception’. Residents live in a ‘zone of indistinction between outside and inside, exception and rule, licit and illicit, in which the very concepts of subjective right and juridical protection no longer make any Sense” (14).

“Thousands of Rohingya died in the bloody summer of 2012. It was the start of five long years of uninterrupted genocide, during which Arakan State became a killing field” (167). This mass killing of a particular community exposes the intention of the state. In the words of Agamben, the state sees these people as a “bare life” (Agamben 5). According to Agamben bare life is “the life of homo sacer (sacred man), who may be killed yet not sacrificed” (6). Homo Sacer is a kind of ambivalence and the reason that there’s an ambivalence is because “Sacer” (6) literally can refer to sacred, and when we think of sacred we probably think someone who’s exalted may be held in high esteem. However, Agamben uses this term in a negative light. This means that someone who was seen as sacred and clean can also be observed as filthy. Henceforth, these people can be ostracized from the political order. This image of dirtiness or filthiness projects that the refugees are someone who has to be excluded.

Now, in this novel, Rohingya overall is also seen in a similar way. Their life is nothing other than a flesh. Nevertheless, their life is necessary, just to exercise the sovereign power

The Politics of Displacement of Refugees in Habiburrahman's Novel *First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks*

of a person or a state. Here Rohingyas are suffering from all these atrocities of not becoming full-fledged humans. They are being misused in various cases in the novel, such as the labor force, and are just there to be tortured, raped, and killed. Very early in the morning, I join the others who have been pressed into forced labor. "I have brought my shovel and a rattan basket. Before we leave, our district leader shouts out the usual refrain: 'You are volunteers helping to develop the nation. Give your best for the community'" (Habiburrahman 41).

The quandary of the Rohingya people in Myanmar discourses a state of exception, where Rohingyas are subjected to exclusion, displacement, and organized persecution. Despite their rooted history in this land, the Rohingyas are snatched of their rights, are denied their rightful positioning in society, and are also treated as outsiders in their land. The laws the government has put forth are discriminatory, and the construction of refugee camps has downgraded to the zone of indistinction, where their basic human rights are being overruled. This resonates with the concept of bare life, as philosophized by Agamben, where the individuals can be disposed of and can be easily excluded from the political order. The suffering of Rohingyas and the exposure of them to the dehumanizing politics should bring the attention of the international stakeholders to address this ongoing humanitarian crisis.

Second Phase of Displacement

This second phase of displacement happens when Habiburrahman tries to escape his land to seek refuge in other countries. So, during that process he had to pass through lots of struggles and hindrances. Habib remembers how "hunting down the Bengali invaders - the Rohingyas, us - is a ritual that has been happening for decades in Myanmar. The lives of the 'parasites of the nation' are made more unbearable and miserable with each passing year, as the effort to eliminate the 'vermin', and 'black infidels', continues apace. Burials of our people are frequent" (Habiburrahman 52). Due to all these brutalities, the protagonist had to flee his original land.

Immanuel Kant introduces a concept called "cosmopolitan right", which is limited to "right to hospitality". This term does not directly induce foreigners to become guests of a nation or a place, but it mainly focuses on the rights of individuals, who can become guests without facing hostility and violence. According to Kant, a paper edited by Pauline Kleingled writes that a person can go to any foreign land without facing any kind of resentment or ferocity by the host. Here in this novel, in the second phase of displacement, Habiburrahman had to pass through lots of struggles and difficulties during his movement.

The displacement began when Habib and his family had to go to another area known as Sittwe. They were taken via truck and were thrown out in the land. As soon as they were thrown out of the vehicle they were taken to the cells. Instantly they face the police brutality of pushing and hitting on different parts of their bodies. "The policeman pushes us into a cell

The Politics of Displacement of Refugees in Habiburrahman's Novel *First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks*

of around 40 square meters, which is crammed with 50 or so prisoners. Many are hunched in uncomfortable positions" (78). Habib also talks about the vivid segregation happening in Myanmar. The 'kalars' (a derogatory term used to call Rohingyas) were separated from other groups, so that they could be spotted and tortured later.

In the twenty-sixth chapter Habib plans for his journey. A journey to escape from Arakan. "I am going on a perilous journey to escape this bottomless quagmire of life as a Rohingya. If they knew what I was planning, they would try to dissuade me" (97). He does not want to look back and stop himself from staying there to suffer every single day. He is seeking opportunities outside. But at the same time in the name of seeking opportunities he might get caught during his travels, and he might face the deadliest of consequences. "I am leaving, and I am well aware of the risks. If I am caught by the authorities, indefinite imprisonment or death awaits. I know this. But if I succeed, a world of possibilities is waiting to be discovered outside Arakan. Then you will be proud of your son, Dad" (97). Nevertheless, he wants to move.

During this displacement, Habib had to practice the art of invisibility. If he was visible, then he had to face the peril of the state. But, if he learned how to melt in with the crowd he would escape. Habib meets one of his uncles, Begom, who for a very short period of time, gives him a refuge. Not an unconditional one as Derrida theorizes, but a conditional one. Uncle is also worried about Habib's presence in his house and helps him to escape from that place. Habib is moving to Irrawaddy for further studies. "I'm not planning to stay here. I want to go to Irrawaddy to continue my studies" (99). But uncle Begom claims that his plan is a tedious plan and seems impossible for him. He gets detained by the police and asks him his reason to travel. But during the conversation, the police acted brutally. "One of the soldiers pulls me brutally by the arm and shoves me into the cabin that serves as their office. He grabs me by the neck and crushes my head on the table. Hey, kalar! You think you can just go from one state to the other, as if you lived here? Search him!" (102).

From Irrawady he moves to Yangon and gets caught. He was treated like an animal, brutally tortured. "With my bloodied head still covered with the sack, my hands tied behind my back and attached to a bar, I become their punching ball. My feet have been put on a block of ice that is burning me and the cold is so unbearable that I have lost all feeling in my calf muscles" (123). He escapes from there and is traveling to Mandalay which is 400 miles away from Yangon. During his travels he had to be very cautious and aware about militaries, police and soldiers. "Despite my state of exhaustion, I keep an eye out at every station. As we approach Bago, a military stop, I am extra vigilant" (129). From there he reaches the border of Laos, Thailand and Vietnam also known as the Golden Triangle.

We need to remember while practicing invisibility, Habib was not able to create a space, as Henry Lefebvre discusses about creating a space. "Lefebvre sets up his conception

The Politics of Displacement of Refugees in Habiburrahman's Novel *First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks*

of the production of space. He sees it as a privileged means to explore alternative and emancipatory strategies" (Harvey 182). If Habib was able to create this space, his invisibility would have become visible. He would stand there with ease and comfort. Quoting Foucault, Lefebvre writes, "Michel Foucault can calmly assert that knowledge (savior) is also the space in which the subject may take up the position and speak of the objects with which he deals in his discourse" (Lefebvre 4). This creation of knowledge was deprived to the Rohingya refugees, which was suffered by the protagonist Habib. If he was able to do that, he would have created his space and remained visible, wherever he traveled. Very few people offer him help. One taxi driver in Thailand helps him to find out Burmese people, so that he can share his problems with them. This little help can be connected to Derrida's unconditional hospitality. Due to some Burmese Guerilla fighters, Ramzan, Habib's friend in Thailand and Habib had to flee that place too. These Guerilla fighters were notorious, who fought against the Junta soldiers in the borders of Thailand. Habib wants some peace in himself and expects if there is any Muslim country who could be a little lenient towards them. But Ramzan notifies him that Malaysia the muslim country, is not at all acceptable to them. "Oh, my dear

brother, Malaysia is a Muslim country but there is no way in the world that I would want to go back there. I can't tell you which country might be the most welcoming for stateless people like us. I've been in many places and each one is as horrendous as the next" (141).

"I swiftly enter the shop and hide behind the shelves. The old man smiles at me and I smile back. He has understood. He offers me some tea and I take advantage of his hospitality to use his telephone. Ramzan has given me the number of another potential employer in Golok called Chalem" (143). This particular instance gives us the impression of Derrida's unconditional hospitality being applied. So, during this second phase of displacement, we must understand that there are numerous of instances of brutality and torture. In addition, the stateless people like Habib had to pass through various hindrances, and also had to be invisible in many instances. He had to melt down, disappear, or hide from the police or from the authorities.

Third Phase of Displacement

In this novel this phase is the final phase where Habib goes to Australia. "I am left with no choice but to cut off my phone and flee. My only option is to try to reach Australia by sea" (Habib 155). Initially, the protagonists and other refugees were treated with warmth and compassion. "For the first time in our lives, the authorities treat us with dignity, respect, and compassion. Am I dreaming?" (158). He was shocked to receive this response from a foreigner in Australia. But later on in 2010, they were again reintroduced as refugees by the United Nations. Some of them were taken to the refugee detention center, once again a

The Politics of Displacement of Refugees in Habiburrahman's Novel *First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks*

place of wrath and disrespect. Habib writes, "For us, Democracy is a Mirage" (159). This reflection of the place, Australia leads him once again to be outcasted by the government and the sovereign power. The space is also not welcoming.

As we can read and experience, Australian Immigration policies are also not welcoming. Only when the United Nation clarifies a person as a refugee, can only be reckoned as a refugee, and should live in a refugee detention center. "Under the Migration Act 1958, asylum seekers who arrive in Australia, ..., without a valid visa must be held in immigration detention until they are granted a visa or removed from Australia" (Asylum Seekers and Refugees). Due to all these struggles and upheavals the protagonists begin a hunger strike on June 20, 2011. But still it has been more than 18 years that he is stateless and cannot leave Australia. "He is pleading for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Rohingya people he says are silenced by the Myanmar military government" (Doherty).

Australia is the only country in the world that requires all "illegal" immigrants, even those seeking asylum, to be detained. Australia has one of the worst rules on forced migration in the world, with regulations that extend beyond the border; the United States' present practice of incarcerating "illegal" migrants comes close. However, one important contrast is that Australia essentially punishes people who seek refuge in the nation.

The severe detention circumstances to which "illegal" refugees are subjected have been portrayed as a critical component of Australia's border security policy by successive Australian administrations. "Since the 1980s, there has been widespread popular support for a punitive detention regime based on the belief that individuals arriving by boat are either "bogus" refugees trying "easy" admission into Australia for economic gain, or that they pose a security danger" (Loughnan). The fact that most petitions for refugee status by "boat arrivals" are accepted, with a high rate of successful appeals against adverse rulings, debunks these preconceptions. Nonetheless, there is evidence of widespread popular support for tight border security, as well as little worry about Australia's standing as a party to the Refugee Convention. Unfortunately, these viewpoints are frequently founded on misunderstandings about refugee migration, which are fueled by hostile media and government efforts.

Possible Solutions to the Displacement

The main character moves from one place to another seeking refuge from different characters who at times help him to stay in their respective spaces, but most of the time, he had to practice invisibility just to maintain his positioning. To resolve this problem of displacement, many theorists have put forth their understanding and philosophies to address this problem. Refugees are always in the state of danger, danger of exile, killing, torture, rape and many brutal activities. These activities are to be stopped, so that they can have their presence as humans, and as Levinas says, we can at least understand the face of the other.

The Politics of Displacement of Refugees in Habiburrahman's Novel *First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks*

Foucault writes the “sovereign has a right of life and death means that he can, basically, either have people put to death or let them live, or in any case that life and death are not natural or immediate phenomena which are primal or radical, and which fall outside the field of power.” So, in this we can understand that something which seems sovereign tries to exercise power. Not only that, it tries to control over the decision of life and death. This means that when there is a sovereign state, the citizens have to suffer from their atrocities. So, to remove this barrier, a state should be more lenient towards its citizens. Not only that, a state should be more welcoming to other guests too in their territory so to speak. Foucault's theory is more of a problem than a solution. Henceforth, Habib our main character should be symbiotically accepted by the state and the sovereign for the right to life.

David Harvey in his essay “Spaces of Hope ‘ he talks about a concept called “Dialectical Utopianism”. This particular space is an alternative space, “not in terms of some static spatial form or even of some perfected emancipatory process” (196). Rather it is a space of spatial and temporal form. It is in a constant flux. The task is to pull together a spatiotemporal utopianism - a dialectical utopianism - “that is rooted in our present possibilities at the same time as it points towards different trajectories for human uneven

Geographical developments” (Harvey 196). This particular space can be a solution or rather a proposition to tackle the issues of Refugees. This space will produce some hope to the refugees, so that they can become visible on their own. Their invisibility will reduce to the Utopian state, an alternative space, where they can practice their freedom easily. Here Habib was not able to create the space on his own, resulting in his disappearance in the space, even if he was present.

Jacques Derrida talks about “Unconditional Hospitality” in his essay “On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness”. He writes, “The Great Law of Hospitality - an unconditional Law, both singular and universal, which ordered that the borders be open to each and every one, to every other, to all who might come, without question or without even having to identify who they are or whence they came” (Derrida 18). This unconditionality is created through some conditions also. Though it seems a utopian concept; however, Derrida tries to incorporate this unconditionality with the conditionality which Kant talks about, and makes a clear path to apply it actually. This amalgamation of conditional and unconditional hospitality will embrace the refugees in their land, so that they do not have to hide away. The hospitality by the state and the people should act for the stateless people and the refugees. This hospitality is like welcoming without any conditions as such.

Another solution to any problem is education. As we can read in this memoir how Habib tries to indulge himself into reading and writing. His father also pushes him to read and write. He becomes a good student, which lets him pass through various problems during his travels. The education has led him to some kind of freedom in various cases. As mentioned

The Politics of Displacement of Refugees in Habiburrahman's Novel *First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks*

in the second phase of displacement, I would like to quote Foucault once again, where he claims that knowledge is power in itself. Knowledge leads to emancipation and a state of discourse, and can also be seen as the savior.

Rancière argues we will have to re-imagine the Rights of Man without equating it with bare life and without conflating politics with power or biopower. In other words, for

Rancière, the subject of the Rights of Man is not bare life, is not man in the camp under the state of exception. The subject of rights of Man is a plural political subject who always needs to fight for rights. They must stage the resistance against the status quo from the position that "they have the rights that they have not" or from the presupposition that they have been dispossessed of the rights that they were supposed to have always possessed (302). In the last instance, the subject of the Rights of Man is the entire demos, "in the specific scenes of dissensus." These rights should be practiced thoroughly by the refugees also, so that they can act against the odds. The subject of the rights of man is a subject where he or she can fight for their own rights. The resistance against the existing state of affairs, would lead into an unconventional state, again resulting in their rights.

The third idea would be the concept of Public Sphere. "In her book, the Human Condition, Hanna Arendt modeled the idea of public sphere upon an Athenian city, where in principle public space was characterized by the 'arena' accessible to all citizens. The majority of participants of this arena formed the "public body" composed of private citizens" (Kocan 10). In the Public sphere we do not seek consensus and public opinion through discussion, but it can be through dissensus also. Through the practice of consensus and dissensus, a person can put forth their own opinion resulting in the practice of their rights. This continuous discussion is mandatory while finding a common ground for all those stateless people, asylum seekers or refugees. They need a space to talk, discuss and discourse about their problems and try to find out the solutions through rigorous discussion. However, the discussion is a never-ending process in the Public Sphere, which should not be seen as unachievable. It is a process and this process should go on. This process in itself is a result. Because without the process, no one can lead to a conclusion, where the conclusion once again is the process.

Equaliberty, 'is nothing other than the demand for a popular sovereignty and autonomy without exclusions'. Its inherent universality is thus negative (Balibar 44), constituting a radical parallax. This is evident with respect to the second juxtaposition: Man and citizen. While describing the concept of Man and Citizen, Balibar proposes an idea of Extensive as well as Intensive Universality. Extensive Universality ranges the idea of citizenship that includes diverging forms of national as well as federal citizenship. On the contrary, Intensive Universalization is connected to the idea of intrinsic values. That means the concept of being. Here, citizenship should not be denied from the concept of privileges. If there is no

The Politics of Displacement of Refugees in Habiburahman's Novel *First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks*

exclusion while maintaining the inclusion of any people such as stateless or asylum seekers, then we will be solving a greater problem of exclusion.

And, Finally, the approaches of inclusion or the concept of assimilation, or maybe acceptance of the stateless people can be one of the insights; i.e. Universal Cosmopolitanism. "According to this account the Stoic ideal of cosmopolitanism is focussed upon the thought that the cosmos is a city, the only true city, and that it is to this cosmic city that the Stoic will have his primary affiliation" (Sellars). Sellars referring back to Stoic political ideals writes further that the Stoic political philosophy has often been presented as the desire for a worldwide political organization in which all humankind will be fellow citizens and in which all cultural and racial divisions will be transcended.

The moment we understand the problems of displacement of refugees and asylum seekers, we can seek for possible solutions related to it. Whether it is a direct solution or a proposition of the solution, we can get into the gist of the problem. When we talk about the unconditionality of hospitality to the concept of equaliberty and also about the cosmopolitan city, we are finding out a place of refuge for all those stateless people. Whether there is condition of unconditionality, which can be seen as a Kantian idea, that means "is merely the right to present oneself and initiate contact with a foreign individual or state without being treated with hostility or violence" (Kant). We must understand that the conditionality of Kant has a very big role in the formation of unconditionality of Derrida. The right to visit different countries is the right of every person in this world, which also includes refugees and asylum seekers.

Conclusion

Rohingya had to suffer a lot of atrocities by the state and some other ethnic groups. In his own nation, he was left stateless. As a result of tremendous discrimination and persecution, millions of Rohingya have been forced to escape their homes since 1982. In 2016 and 2017, the government accelerated its ethnic cleansing campaign, forcing over 600,000 Rohingya Muslims to flee to Bangladesh. For the first time, a Rohingya speaks up in order to reveal the truth about the worldwide humanitarian situation. We learn about the Rohingya people's history of persecution through the eyes of a youngster, and we see the atrocities Habiburahman faced throughout his childhood until he departed the country in 2000.

Habiburahman's memoir includes his effort to escape his land and seek refuge in other places or countries. Habin decides to embark on a difficult voyage to escape all the problems he faced during his stay in the refugee camps. The three phases of displacement included the phase of displacement in one's own community, secondly to attain the invisibility and finally

The Politics of Displacement of Refugees in Habiburrahman's Novel *First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks*

a displacement in his final destination as well.

The issue of displacement and the situation of the problems of refugees should require a multifaceted approach. Through the philosophies of different theorists and philosophers, we can gain insights into various dimensions of this problem and move to a potential solution. For this I used theorists like Immanuel Levinas, Michel Foucault, Derrida, David Harvey, Ranciere, Hannah Arendt and Balibar to name the few. Their philosophies like ethical responsibility towards refugees, emphasized the recognition of their identities. The Face of the Other calls for the action against all the odds to rectify the problems and reduce their sufferings.

Foucault's critique of the power, mainly the sovereign power, highlights the necessity for the states to act more lenient towards refugees. The state should strive to protect the rights of the refugees and the stateless people and extend hospitality to them. Similarly, David Harvey's creation of dialectical utopianism and Lefebvre's creation of alternative space would provide freedom for refugees, enabling them to become more visible and empower them within the society. Derrida's idea of conditional hospitality, can serve as a basis to embrace the refugees without imposing barriers to them. In addition to that, Foucault's concept of power and knowledge can emerge refugees as a skilled manpower and lead to their emancipation.

Ranciere's notion of the subject emphasizes the need for refugees to fight for their rights and challenge the status quo. The concept of public sphere, basically advocated by Hannah Arendt, puts forth a space for refugees for a series of dialogues and discussion, resulting in a definite conclusion of process. By combining extensive and intensive universality, results in the inclusion of the refugees, which was framed by Balibar. Finally, the concept of universal cosmopolitanism, leads to a vision of universal citizen, transcending beyond the cultural and racial divisions. In attempting to reduce the displacement of refugees, it is crucial to contemplate on these various perspectives, theories, philosophies and approaches. The memoir of Habiburrahman assists as an influential voice that sheds light on the issues of Rohingya, and raises a pressing issue of solidarity towards refugees and the need for action against all the odds. This is a powerful book of what it's like to be oppressed in one's own nation while seeking asylum in another. This book can be a voice for the voiceless.

Works Cited

Abd-al-Bārī, Muḥammad. *The Rohingya Crisis: A People Facing Extinction*. Kube Publishing Ltd, 2018.

Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford University Press, 1998, <http://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=2003>, Accessed 20 Mar. 2024.

"Asylum Seekers and Refugees." *Australian Human Rights Commission*, humanrights.

The Politics of Displacement of Refugees in Habiburahman's Novel *First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks*

gov.au/our-work/rights-and-freedoms/publications/asylum-seekers-and-refugees#:~:text=Under%20the%20Migration%20Act%201958,visa%20or%20removed%20from%20Australia.

- Balibar, Étienne, and James Ingram. *Equaliberty: Political Essays (a John Hope Franklin Center Book)*. Duke University Press Books, 2014.
- Bari, Muhammad Abdul. *The Rohingya Crisis*. Kube Publishing Ltd, 2018. Web. 14 Oct. 2022.
- Bhardwaj, Ashutosh. "First They Erased Our Name | A Rohingya's Chilling Memoir." *The Financial Express*, 19 Oct. 2019, www.financialexpress.com/lifestyle/first-they-erased-our-name-a-rohingyas-chilling-memoir/1740626.
- Derrida, Jacques. *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*. 2nd ed., New York, Routledge, 2001.
- Doherty, Ben. "Rohingya Refugee Pleads for Australia's Permission to Speak to EU." *The Guardian*, 13 Mar. 2018, www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/feb/09/rohingyan-refugee-pleads-for-australias-permission-to-speak-to-eu.
- Foucault, Michel. "*Society Must Be Defended*" Publisher: Picador. Picador, 2022.
- Gratz, Alan. *Refugee*. Scholastic Inc., 2017.
- Habiburahman, Sophie Ansel, and Andrea Reece. *First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks*. Scribe, 2018.
- Hanafi, S., and T. Long. "Governance, Governmentalities, and the State of Exception in the Palestinian Refugee Camps of Lebanon." *Journal of Refugee Studies*, vol. 23, no. 2, June 2010, pp. 134–59. DOI.org (Crossref), <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feq014>.
- Harvey, David. *Spaces of Hope*. Amsterdam University Press, 2000.
- Koçan, Gürçan. *Models of Public Sphere in Political Philosophy*. p. 32.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*. Edited by Pauline Kleingeld, Yale University Press, 2017. DOI.org (Crossref), <https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300128109>.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Blackwell, 1991.
- Loughnan, Claire. "Australia's Harsh Immigration Policy." *The Diplomat*, 30 Aug. 2019, thediplomat.com/2019/08/australias-harsh-immigration-policy.
- Rancière, Jacques. *Who Is the Subject of the Rights of Man?* p. 14.
- Sellars, John. "Stoic cosmopolitanism and Zeno's republic." *History of Political Thought* 28.1 (2007): 1-29.
- Wade, Francis. *Myanmar's Enemy Within: Buddhist Violence and the Making of a Muslim "Other"* (*Asian Arguments*), Zed Books, 2017.