

## Chapter V

### Conclusion

We are not voiceless. We are unheard.

— Warsan Shire, *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth*

Refugees face considerable social, psychological, and economic challenges in their daily survival, compounded by denial, negligence, and systemic discrimination. According to the most recent UNHCR data, “As of the end of June 2024, there are an estimated 122.6 million people around the world who have been forced to flee their homes. Among them are nearly 43.7 million refugees” (UNHCR). While some have obtained citizenship and stability, many continue to struggle with statelessness, lack of recognition, and the trauma of displacement. In analysing the problems faced by refugees, it is important to seek solutions to improve their lives. It is necessary to examine the root causes of ethnic clashes and provide ways to prevent and resolve these problems.

This thesis examines the experiences of refugees displaced from Burma, Sudan, Syria, Sri Lanka, and the Horn of Africa due to war, ethnic conflicts, and political persecution, focusing on their loss of agency under biopolitical oppression. Central to this analysis are Hannah Arendt’s theories of statelessness, the ‘right to have rights,’ the banality of evil, and plurality, which provide insights into the systemic denial of agency and human dignity. As Arendt observed, “The calamity of the rightless is not that they are deprived of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness...but that they no longer belong to any community whatsoever.” Drawing on memoirs, fiction, and non-fiction, the study explores how refugees, especially women and children, navigate oppressive systems while emphasising their resilience and collective efforts to assert agency and resist societal imbalances. Human agency remains the central thread of this analysis.

The first chapter, titled “Introduction,” provides an overview of the study, focusing on migrants, refugees, and internally displaced people. It highlights the causes of refugeehood, the impact of power dynamics on oppressed communities, ethnic diversity, and regional challenges faced by migrants as depicted in the texts. The chapter concludes with an overview of global refugee issues and offers a preview of the subsequent chapters, establishing a comprehensive foundation for the study. Chapter II, titled “Human Debris of Stateless Lives,” examines the disempowered voices of refugees and the factors that limit their agency. It focuses on the forced migrants from Sudan, Syria, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and the Horn of Africa, analysing how individuals are degraded within their own lands based on the communities into which they are born. The chapter explores how prejudiced political power exploits entire regions under its control, leading to widespread oppression.

This chapter uses Hannah Arendt’s ideas about statelessness and the ‘right to have rights’ to explain that stateless people lack the basic political, social, economic, legal, and cultural power needed to live fully as human beings. Arendt’s idea that life becomes both an object and effect of political strategies is used to illustrate how refugees are reduced to mere bodies, losing their agency in both their homelands and places of displacement. The chapter addresses critical questions, such as how refugees experience the loss of political, social, cultural, economic, and legal agency, how statelessness enables their dehumanisation, how the ‘help’ they seek often becomes politically charged, and how hunger becomes a dominating issue overshadowing their struggles. The major focus of the chapter is to detail how power politics in the selected regions reduce the oppressed to voiceless bodies, unable to resist the daily cruelties imposed by entrenched societal hierarchies.

Chapter III, titled “Bo(dies) of No Return,” examines the politics of corporeality and the exploitation of refugee bodies, focusing on the loss of bodily agency experienced by women, children, and men. It explores how the brutal treatment of refugee bodies represents the ‘banality of evil,’ a concept introduced by Hannah Arendt, and how these bodies are used as tools through which power is exerted. Drawing on Arendt’s concept of the ‘banality of evil,’ the chapter argues that body politics is inherently linked to power politics. It illustrates how those in power exploit the loss of bodily agency to control refugees, reducing them to mere bodies devoid of autonomy. While women face sexual violence, children suffer neglect and abuse, and men endure forced labour and physical violence in detention, all refugees experience the loss of bodily agency. The chapter uses incidents from the primary texts to highlight how reducing refugees to their physical forms enhances the power of oppressors, allowing them to maintain control over vulnerable populations.

The chapter also explores how refugees—especially women and children—are kept vulnerable on purpose to make them dependent and afraid. This fear helps maintain control over them. The loss of control over their bodies, through acts like sexual violence, forced labour, or other abuse, is a major way power is enforced. Finally, the chapter shows that the mistreatment of refugee bodies, across all ages and genders, helps oppressive systems survive and continues to push displaced communities to the edges of society. Chapter IV, titled “(Re)silience and Agency,” explores the resilience and solidarity of refugees in the selected regions, emphasising how they endure the cruelties of discrimination and continue to face life with hope for a better future. The chapter explicitly applies Arendt’s concept of plurality to examine how refugees, both individually and collectively, endure oppression and rebuild agency. Arendt’s plurality serves as the

foundation for understanding how refugees use solidarity as a means to overcome violence and adversity.

It explores how refugees, empowered by their shared experiences, challenge their circumstances with intelligence and resilience. The chapter details how, through this collective action, refugees not only physically resist their oppressors but also use speech and writing as tools of resistance, exposing the injustices they face. The act of coming together in plurality, as Arendt suggests, becomes a powerful mode of agency, enabling refugees to fight back against their struggles with strength and unity. This chapter uses the primary texts to show how they prove the refugees' strength, uncover hidden stories, and highlight how working together helps their voices be heard. The chapter underscores how refugees, by functioning as a community, recoup their autonomy and move toward freedom. Through plurality, they resist the oppression imposed on them and use their collective agency to challenge power structures, demonstrating the strength of solidarity in their fight for liberation.

The chapters in this thesis converge around the central theme of agency, particularly the loss and reclamation of political, social, economic, and bodily agency by refugees. Chapter II, "Human Debris of Stateless Lives," examines how refugees are stripped of their agency, reduced to mere bodies subject to the cruelty of power politics, in line with Arendt's concept of statelessness and the right to have rights. Chapter III, "Bo(dies) of No Return," further explores this loss of bodily agency, focusing on how refugees, especially women and children, are subjected to corporeal violence as a tool of political control. It applies Arendt's idea of the 'banality of evil' to demonstrate how power is exerted through the exploitation of refugee bodies. Chapter IV, "(Re)silience and Agency," shifts to the reclamation of agency, where Arendt's concept of plurality becomes central. It shows how refugees, through collective solidarity, recover their agency by

acting as a community, confronting oppression not only through physical resistance but also through intellectual and creative means.

The chapters together demonstrate the course from the loss of agency to its recuperation, emphasising the importance of both individual resilience and community solidarity in the refugees' continuing struggle for freedom and human dignity. Hannah Arendt, drawing from her own experience as a refugee, examines both the personal pain of being displaced and the political reasons behind it. She highlights that such crises are not just individual tragedies but part of a larger system. Arendt also believes that refugees, asylum seekers, and other displaced people still have some agency, even when they are pushed to the margins. Analysing how they use this limited power helps us better understand how control and inequality are maintained in society.

After a detailed analysis of the core chapters, the thesis identifies key findings concerning refugees from Sudan, Syria, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and the Horn of Africa. These findings are validated through the examples provided in the primary sources and supported by relevant research articles. The research reveals that the experiences of refugees from these regions share common patterns, despite their geographical and cultural differences. The suffering endured by these refugees and their processes of resistance are strikingly similar. Regardless of their country of origin, these individuals face a loss of self-respect and survive only through external assistance. The treatment they receive in host countries is also largely uniform—being regarded as outsiders, unwanted, and alien, deepening their sense of displacement and dislocation. A recurring theme across these refugees is the universal struggle to overcome psychological, social, and economic challenges, with hope serving as their primary means of survival.

Most refugees around the world live without finding a path to a better life. However, Sandra Uwiringiyimana, with the privilege of education and U.S. citizenship,

chooses to confront the insecurities imposed on her by those in power. She decides to share her story openly, defying those who tried to silence her. “We must open up our hearts. We must not fall prey to the kind of thinking that separates us” (Uwiringiyimana 195). As someone whose community suffered from hatred used to gain power, Uwiringiyimana understands that the only real answer is to choose love over hate. She bravely speaks about the violence her people faced, without fear. She calls for acceptance and asks others to respect all cultures as much as they respect their own.

The study emphasises the central role of ethnic conflict and hatred in the displacement of refugees from Myanmar, Sudan, Syria, Sri Lanka, and the Horn of Africa. The crisis in these regions is driven by ethnic discord, which, despite the different settings, produces remarkably similar outcomes: forced migration, loss of identity, and systemic exclusion. As noted by Aarushi Malik in her article published in *The Hindu* on August 10, 2024, “According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), by the end of 2023, 11.73 crore people, worldwide, had been forcibly displaced due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order. Among them, 3.76 crore were refugees” (Malik). The research highlights how hatred and violence are not confined to one region but contribute to a global refugee crisis. The findings suggest that addressing these underlying causes—ethnic hatred and violence—could significantly mitigate refugee displacement worldwide.

Another important finding is the influence of power politics—especially biopolitics—in creating and sustaining refugeehood. Hatred, often cultivated within communities, is worsened by the misuse of power. The research contends that when power is used to oppress and marginalise vulnerable groups, it deepens ethnic divisions and leads to displacement. In the absence of such oppressive structures, communities would have a better chance at peaceful coexistence and equality. The thesis maintains that power should

serve the collective good by nurturing inclusion and stability, not by reinforcing divisions. While certain forms of biopolitical governance have shown success in specific situations, excessive control over bodies and minds results in widespread suffering and forced migration. Thus, biopolitics emerges as a key factor in ethnic conflict and refugee crises. The study stresses that power and representation must be exercised with responsibility, especially in protecting and uplifting marginalised communities.

This study also finds that refugees constantly struggle with identity politics. Biopolitics takes away their humanity and stops others from seeing them as individuals with dreams and goals. Identity politics keeps them on the margins and denies them the basic things they need to survive. People in power often ignore the needs of weaker groups like refugees. Their decisions reflect social prejudice. Identity politics adds to this prejudice instead of breaking it down. Even after leaving their home countries, refugees face the same issues in camps and shelters. Identity politics follows them everywhere. The discrimination they once faced becomes part of who they are. Their identity turns into a lifelong struggle.

Zoya Phan realises that true freedom does not come from finding a new land but from reclaiming the one that was lost. The forces that hurt her community want to drive them away because they know the Karen people are close to gaining freedom if they stay near their homeland. These forces take away the idea of 'home,' leaving the people not just displaced but also cut off from their roots. Zoya remembers her father's hope, "Our father did not live to see freedom for our people, but his dream lives on. The Karen, and all the people of Burma, will be free" (Phan 351). This shows that their dream of freedom is closely linked to their homeland. Zoya believes, like her father, that the Karen and other oppressed people in Burma will keep fighting until they win the right to return home.

Their resistance is strong and brave. They fight not just to survive, but to take back what was unfairly taken from them.

A related finding is that the loss of identity often leads to permanent alienation. Once refugees lose their identity in the eyes of society, it becomes extremely challenging to regain a sense of belonging. This loss creates an ongoing battle to establish an identity, as they are constantly dehumanised by society. The migrants, upon leaving their homelands, often carry the weight of being perceived as ‘nobodies.’ The sense of alienation follows them, lingering even when they eventually gain citizenship or attempt to rebuild their lives in a more welcoming country. The experiences of rejection, hatred, and displacement in their homeland leave deep psychological scars, making it difficult for refugees to find peace or acceptance, even in a new country. Societal prejudices against refugees further complicate their integration, creating barriers to acceptance and making it hard for them to build new identities. The detrimental effects of identity politics thus prevent refugees from feeling a sense of pride or ownership over their own lives and identity.

The study also records several important observations and findings that contribute to refugee studies, particularly regarding refugees’ resilience against oppression. Education is identified as a vital tool of resilience, serving as a key way to challenge the cycle of oppression and break down barriers that limit refugee agency. For example, in the Darfur camp described in the novel *The Milk of Birds*, refugees struggle for basic survival, and access to education is often denied, leaving them vulnerable and dependent on others. This denial traps refugees especially women, in a cycle of ignorance, preventing them from understanding how power exploits them and causing them to internalize blame for their own suffering. Adeeba’s progressive mindset empowers her to speak out against these violations and take proactive steps to protect other women in the camp. Similarly, it

is education and the fight for education that have given Uwiringiyimana, Habiburrahman, and Phan the confidence, hope, and ability to write memoirs about their struggles and those of their people as stateless individuals.

It is also noted that asylum seekers face enormous struggles to attain refugee status. There is a long journey for people in exile, from being considered nobody to becoming recognized, at least, as refugees. It is often misunderstood that a person becomes a refugee simply by losing citizenship and leaving their homeland. However, the reality is that stateless individuals must go through many procedures to gain the official title of refugee upon reaching a host country. For example, in the novel *The Boat People*, Mahindan and Ranga are shocked to learn that they are not considered refugees just because they have left Sri Lanka and are staying in a detention centre in Canada:

This is the thing, the interpreter said. As far as the law is concerned, you have no status. To stay here, you must first become a refugee, and this is a little complicated. But we're refugees, no? Ranga asked. Otherwise, what else? What did these people think? Mahindan wondered. They had got on a rickety ship and nearly killed themselves crossing the ocean for a holiday? (34)

Another important observation is the act of 'walking on' by refugees, which symbolizes resilience. When refugees have no other options, they keep moving—walking to escape their problems, face new challenges, and build a better future. Their long journeys are powerful signs that they are alive and full of hope. For example, Zoya Phan and her family, knowing that war, bombs, and gunfire are closing in on their home, begin a near-death trek through the jungle, stopping only when they reach camps at the border. Similarly, Nawra and her mother walk away from their home and do not stop, even after being assaulted, violated, and wounded by a bullet. The act of continuing to walk, despite

losing loved ones along the way, shows the refugees' incredible resilience and will to survive.

The study also highlights the persistent and immediate threat of death that refugees live with daily. A significant number of refugees, particularly children, die due to hunger and malnutrition. Fleeing from their homes due to ethnic conflicts, they often face the grim reality that their survival depends on escaping their homeland. The oppressors not only aim to force refugees out of their lands but also seek to eliminate them entirely. The refugees' fear of death follows them wherever they go. In asylum centres and camps, they continue to live under the constant threat of starvation and illness. With insufficient food and resources, many refugees, especially children, perish from malnutrition and related health issues. The daily existence of these refugees becomes a question of survival—resisting death, enduring harsh conditions, and struggling for the basic right to life. This relentless fear of death shapes their lives, making it a constant battle to remain alive amidst a world of violence, deprivation, and uncertainty.

Despite showcasing resilience through plurality, refugees employ various tools for survival, such as storytelling and self-representation, to highlight their community's struggles. Achieving the capacity to voice injustices requires overcoming significant obstacles. When refugees are unable to represent themselves due to severe oppression, others often bring their plight to public attention. For instance, a *BBC* article (June 30, 2024) reported on an exhibition showcasing life in the Rohingya refugee camps of Cox's Bazar, the largest refugee camp globally, highlighting their "trials, triumphs, and resilience" ("Exhibition" 6). Such resilience enables refugees to amplify their voices, challenge dominant power structures, and advocate for their rights.

The thesis also reveals that migrant women and children are often viewed as commodified bodies by the oppressors, subjected to brutal violations and treated worse

than animals in their homelands, on route to camps, and within the camps itself. Those who are supposed to protect the refugees frequently become the greatest source of danger, subjecting refugee women to constant sexual violence as a means of instilling fear among the displaced community. Nawra is brutally violated at home, her mother is inhumanly raped on their way to camp, Adeeba and Zeinab are raped by the soldiers in the camp who were supposed to protect them and Zoya Phan receives continuous rape threats in letters as she and her father were fighting against the oppression in Myanmar. Women and children are used as tools to create terror, reinforcing the power dynamics that oppress them. The violence against women also serves a strategic purpose for the oppressors—violating the women associated with resistance groups to quell any thoughts of rebellion. This form of exploitation severely hampers the refugees' capacity to work for their own improvement, as they are consumed with the need to survive.

The study also underscores that refugees face constant hatred and unfair treatment, which makes it hard for them to fight back or solve their problems. People often see refugees in a negative way, as threats instead of needing help. Those in power say refugees are dangerous to justify hurting them. They believe they are doing the right thing by getting rid of refugees. This belief comes from long-held hate and prejudice, passed down over time. The oppressors think their actions are right, they feel no guilt and have no real proof or justification for their actions.

Another significant finding is the intentional economic marginalisation of refugees, which serves to increase their dependence on external aid and make them easier to dominate. In their homelands, oppressors begin by disrupting the refugees' livelihoods, systematically confiscating their land and property. Over time, the oppressed are forced to deplete their savings in an attempt to survive, ultimately pushing them to the brink of displacement. Once refugees arrive in camps, they are often prevented from becoming

economically self-sufficient, ensuring they remain dependent. Nisho from the *City of Thorns*, is a character who does tremendous physical labour all day but never gets enough money to feed himself properly. Uwiringiyimana and her family also suffer due to starvation and lack of necessities throughout their life in the camp and Nawra and Adeeba in *The Milk of Birds* spend hours and hours of standing in the queue everyday to fill drinking water in their pots. Despite these obstacles, refugees persist in their efforts to save and move to other countries, hoping for a better life.

Furthermore, the study highlights the normalisation of violence against refugees, where killing, typically considered a crime, becomes an unchallenged act. In many cases, the deaths of refugees are not questioned, as they are perceived as collateral damage. Mr. Türk, the current United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, during his speech at the fifty fourth session of the UN Human Rights Council reported, “I am shocked by the nonchalance that becomes apparent in the face of more than 2,300 people reported dead or missing in the Mediterranean this year, including the loss of more than 600 lives in a single shipwreck off Greece in June” (QUNO). The mass killings of refugees are often rebranded as ‘cleansing’ rather than acknowledged as murder. In war zones and refugee camps, the death toll continues to rise without any accountability or legal recourse. The oppressors, with the complicity of those in power, carry out massacres, and the international community fails to hold them accountable. This brutal violence should be recognised as a crime against humanity, irrespective of the identities of the perpetrators and the victims.

The theme of silence, particularly the silencing of refugees, is pivotal in the narrative. The constant trauma that Nawra and others face leads them to relive their horrific experiences, leaving them unable to speak of their suffering. Nawra’s mother, having endured the loss of her family and sexual violence, loses her ability to speak

altogether. As Whitman writes, “Where there was only my mother’s silence, we have now the scratch of sticks on the ground and the pen on paper and the recitation of the dressed-up words we are learning” (Whitman 78). This silence is not just a personal loss but a reflection of the systemic oppression that seeks to erase the voices of the oppressed. Nawra, however, remains a beacon of strength, using the letters from K.C. to heal and regain some sense of hope. These letters, small acts of kindness, bring Nawra a sense of joy amidst the despair of her world. They underscore the immense impact that even the smallest gestures of love can have on those who are suffering. This highlights the importance of collective action and solidarity.

One finding is the commonality of experience among refugees from different regions such as Myanmar, Syria, Sudan, and Sri Lanka. Despite their varied ethnic and national backgrounds, refugees share similar struggles of displacement, violence, and survival. Violence, typically regarded as abnormal, becomes normalised in the context of forced migration. The constant exposure to violence in their home countries and refugee camps transforms it into an everyday reality, intensifying their suffering and further entrenching their trauma. Phan, Uwiringiyimana and Habiburahman’s attempts to voice out the issues is an attempt of resilience and so is Nawra’s attempt to stay silent in order to survive. However, it is the act of voicing out, that would help the refugees in moving towards freedom.

While normal children listen to stories to fall asleep, Habiburahman is haunted by the unrelenting tales of Rohingya suffering, which prevent him from resting. His grandmother, knowing no other way to pass on their history, recounts the brutal realities that have been suppressed by those in power, hidden from the world except for the victims who endured them. She describes how many lives were lost, women were subjected to unspeakable torture, and their possessions were seized. “Caught in a trap, some preferred

to jump into the water and drown themselves rather than fall into the repulsive criminal hands of these men” (Habiburahman 13). This is not a distant past; it is a moment of systemic violence that took place in 1942, forcing the Rohingya to flee into the forest, abandoning everything in order to survive.

Another finding is the significant lack of protection for refugees, both from their home governments and the international community. Refugees are left highly vulnerable to exploitation, violence, and neglect, with little intervention or support to ensure their safety. This absence of protection is especially evident in refugee camps and asylums, where they face daily threats to their well-being, including insufficient food, healthcare, and shelter. In *The Milk of Birds*, the IDPs go through lack of sanitation facilities, Physical violations of women and lack of proper necessities. Phan also goes through starvation in the camps and her education taking a gap affects her the most. Habiburahman fears being exposed during his stay at Thailand, as the non- citizens are beaten to death, if being caught. Mahindan also suffers due to hunger and most importantly the forceful separation from his son Sellian. The lack of legal safeguards and deep-rooted marginalisation further exacerbates the suffering of all refugees, IDPs and Asylum seekers.

The thesis has a few limitations, shaped by its specific focus and time constraints. One major limitation is the selection of only four regions - Myanmar, Syria, Sudan, Sri Lanka, and the Horn of Africa - as representatives of the refugee experience. While these regions offer valuable insights, they do not cover the full global scope of refugee displacement, and the experiences of refugees in other parts of the world remain unexplored. In addition, the dynamic nature of refugee statistics means that the data presented in the thesis is accurate only for a specific period and may not reflect the current realities of displacement. Furthermore, while the emotional aspect of refugee experiences is discussed in a nuanced manner, it is not dealt with exclusively, leaving room for a more

focused exploration in future research. Lastly, as this is a qualitative study without a sample, the analysis relies solely on selected texts, which may limit the generalisability of the findings.

A key strength of the thesis lies in its focused exploration of agency, framed through Arendt's concept of political action and resistance. This focus allows for a deeper understanding of how refugees resist oppressive structures and assert their identity. However, this concentration on agency also limits the study by excluding other important factors such as health, hygiene, and economic survival, which also play significant roles in the refugee experience. Moreover, the thesis examines a limited number of primary texts, which, while providing valuable insights, may not capture the full range of perspectives in the refugee discourse. In addition to its deep exploration of agency, another strength of the thesis is its emphasis on biopolitics and body politics, offering a nuanced analysis of how power structures shape the lives of refugees. The thesis also provides a strong theoretical framework through Arendt's concepts, helping to contextualise refugee experiences in a broader political and philosophical context.

The global refugee crisis has reached unprecedented levels, with over 120 million individuals forcibly displaced due to conflicts, persecution, and human rights violations ("Refugee Statistics"). The war between Russia and Ukraine has significantly contributed to this surge, displacing millions and straining Europe's humanitarian response infrastructure. In the Middle East, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict persists as a central crisis. Recent escalations in Gaza have led to catastrophic humanitarian outcomes, "An estimated 1,139 people were killed and some 250 were taken captive in the attack in southern Israel" ("Israel's War"). Simultaneously, conflicts in Syria, Afghanistan, and Sudan remain major drivers of displacement, with millions forced to flee amid ongoing violence and political instability. These crises highlight the collective failure of global mechanisms to address

the root causes of displacement or provide sustainable solutions for refugees, leaving millions in dangerous conditions.

The international response to these challenges has been insufficient and uneven. The United Nations has requested \$47 billion in aid to help about 190 million people in 32 countries. However, due to donor fatigue and reduced budgets, only 43% of this appeal has been met (“UN Humanitarian Office”). Countries that usually host large numbers of refugees, like Turkey and several European nations supporting Ukrainian refugees, are also seeing a rise in anti-refugee attitudes and changes in policy. For instance, Turkey, which hosts over 3.8 million Syrian refugees, is facing growing demands for refugee repatriation due to economic difficulties (Guzel). Similarly, European countries are rethinking their support for Ukrainian refugees because of pressure on housing, healthcare, and education systems (“Several EU Countries”). To respond effectively to these complex crises, there is a need for both immediate humanitarian aid and strong international cooperation to address the deeper inequalities that drive displacement.

Several important aspects of refugee narratives require further study and detailed analysis. One key area for future research is the medical and health conditions of refugees, especially in refugee camps. Although these camps are often seen as safe spaces, a closer examination of health and hygiene conditions reveals a different reality. This shows the urgent need to improve medical services and living standards for refugees. Refugee narratives can also be studied using social and Marxist perspectives to understand the exploitation they face and to consider ways to improve their long-term conditions. This approach helps reveal the systemic inequalities that make their situation worse and highlights possible paths to social and economic empowerment. A feminist analysis of refugee experiences can also offer important insights, especially into how women and children are often treated as ‘vulgar bodies,’ exposed to physical and sexual violence, and

denied their agency. Future research could look more closely at the gendered aspects of displacement and the specific problems faced by refugee women and children.

Global epidemics like COVID-19 have had a serious impact on refugee populations. These crises have increased existing vulnerabilities and overwhelmed the limited healthcare systems in refugee camps. Researchers should investigate how health emergencies affect refugee communities, as this can offer valuable insights and help design better support systems. Legal rights also play a crucial role in improving the lives of refugees. Researchers must focus on how law and policy shape refugee experiences. Strong legal protections can help refugees move from a state of mere survival to one of greater freedom and dignity. Governments should enforce laws that support refugees and revise those that do not. These actions can give refugees more control over their lives. Human rights organizations must also take an active role in ensuring the safety and well-being of stateless people around the world.

Refugee communities often use the limited power available to them in constructive ways. In contrast, those in positions of authority sometimes use power destructively, which worsens social crises. Refugees who work toward equality show what genuine power looks like. Meanwhile, the dictators who cause their displacement often follow a path of self-destruction. As Arendt states, “All political institutions are manifestations and materializations of power; they petrify and decay as soon as the living power of the people ceases to uphold them” (4.6). When political power does not support inclusive growth and public well-being, it loses its true purpose and turns into a source of harm.

Refugees who have experienced ethnic conflict, war, and genocide suffer the devastating effects of violence carried out in the name of power. Laws such as the non-refoulement policies in some countries often misuse power and deny refugees the right to

return to their homeland. In his article “Hannah Arendt’s Concept of Power,” Ngoru Nixon explains that “power is the essence of all government, but violence is not. A government which is exclusively based on power will definitely sustain while no government which is solely based on the means of violence can prolong and in fact has ever existed” (555). Arendt’s view underlines that power is essential for stable governance, while violence, as a method of rule, cannot last.

This idea shows the importance of using power responsibly for the common good. Misusing power and relying on violence cause immense suffering, especially for vulnerable groups like refugees. When governments use power destructively, as seen in war and ethnic conflict, they force people from their homes and disrupt entire communities. This underscores the urgent need for power to serve justice and public welfare. In a powerful act of resistance, Nawra and Adeeba choose to break the silence forced upon them by those in power. When they speak to the press, they take a bold step by sharing their story of assault and demanding justice. Their courage is both a personal act of empowerment and a public rejection of the systems that tried to silence them. By refusing to remain silent, they assert their right to be heard and to seek justice. This act allows them to reclaim their agency and challenge the silence that has allowed such abuses to continue without consequence.

The potential areas of further study in the field of refugee narratives can be narrowed to (i) Health, hygiene and pandemics in refugee camps, (ii) Social, Marxist and feminist perspectives on refugee exploitation, (iii) climate change and its impact on displacement and (iv) Psychosocial well-being of refugees. It is an important observation and recommendation that Hannah Arendt’s political theories concepts and philosophies can be used not only for refugee studies but for all groups that are oppressed and marginalized in the society, all over the world. Her ideas on power politics, statelessness,

plurality, banality of evil and right to have rights withstand time and is highly relevant for the political situation even today, in the year 2025. Her theoretical aspects can be applied to all marginalised literature and would be highly beneficial in eradicating the root cause of their problems and seeking justice. Arendt's ideas can be helpful in developing critical thesis with a tone of argument that seeks equity in the society.

It is crucial to recognise that the stories of refugees depicted in fiction are not mere tales but real-life struggles experienced by individuals with flesh and blood. As *the Milk of Birds* emphasises, “This story is fiction; Darfur’s genocidal civil war is not” (Whitman 310). Writers and researchers bring the plight of refugees to the forefront after meticulous observation, shedding light on their pain. While it is true that no one can perfectly encapsulate the depth of suffering experienced by another, particularly someone who has lived through such agony, it remains imperative for those with the platform and the privilege to speak on behalf of the voiceless. Refugees, deprived of the right to share their own stories, rely on others to amplify their experiences. The dissemination of their pain through words can only cease when there is a universal peace—yet peace remains an elusive ideal for many, and until it is achieved, the responsibility to bear witness falls upon those who can.

In the Thanu Htoo *Journal* published on 31 January 1999, on the fiftieth anniversary of Karen resistance, Phan’s father dedicated a poignant poem to his daughter:

O my beloved daughter

Keep sincerity and conscience,

Alertness and ethics,

Diligence and learning,

Faith and uprightness,

Courage and sacrifice,  
As a base and journey on,  
With fearlessness,  
For the noble cause. (348)

These lines serve not only as a father's blessing but as a timeless manifesto for all women engaged in the struggle for justice. In a world where gender-based violence and the marginalisation of refugee women persist; such voices call for resilience and truth-telling. Figures like Phan and Uwiringiyimana demonstrate that bearing witness and confronting oppression remain vital acts of courage. Literature, as shown by the writers examined in this thesis, continues to be a powerful medium through which silenced experiences are articulated and transformative possibilities imagined. The moral clarity and conviction expressed in this poem echo across the narratives studied, reaffirming the enduring role of literature in confronting injustice and sustaining collective memory.

Looking ahead, the constant absence of empathy and justice continues to shape the structural conditions that marginalise and displace vulnerable communities. Ethical leadership demands more than governance; it calls for a conscious commitment to equity and inclusion. Education, in this context, becomes a transformative force—capable of addressing historical wrongs and nurturing critical awareness. Scholars play a crucial role in articulating the lived experiences of refugees and in shaping discourse that restores their dignity and visibility. As this thesis has illustrated, literature serves not only as a mirror to suffering but also as a means of resistance and remembrance. The pressing question that remains is whether societies will choose to act on these insights—or allow silence and exclusion to continue.