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A Study of the Syrian Refugees' Issues in *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes*

Gul Naz Begum^{*1}, Dr. Rab Nawaz Khan²

Original Article

1. SST (G), GGHS, Sanizo Shah, KP, Pakistan.
Email: begumgulnaz1996@gmail.com
2. Assistant Professor, Department of English, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, KP, Pakistan. Email: rabnawaz@awkum.edu.pk & rabnawaznuml@gmail.com

Keywords	Abstract
Identity Exploitation, Exclusion	Conflict, One of the most fundamental requisitions of human beings in life is <i>peace, but it can hardly be achieved by only explaining one's stance and dilemma to others. People who adhere to their needs mostly exploit others. This is true for Syrian refugees. They are plundered, exploited, tortured and tormented psychologically, physically and financially. They are passing through the most uncertain phase of life where they remain prone and can lose their lives anytime. The main purpose of this study is to expose the issues of the refugees and to showcase their relevance to Atia Abawi's novel, A Land of Permanent Goodbyes. A Land of Permanent Goodbyes is a story of hope, loss, despair, and survival. Atia Abawai has highlighted the issue of war and its dire consequences in the shape of refugees' sufferings in their own land as well as in other countries. She is a news correspondent and writer, and has witnessed these situations. Refugees face exploitation almost at every step of their journey from homeland to another land. Tariq, a character in the novel, loses most of his family members in the war, and during his struggle to escape and survive, he faces unbearable sufferings because of the fact that he is a refugee. The novel reflects how psychologically, physically, economically, politically and ideologically these people are oppressed only due to war and a game of interests in their country. These issues have been studied and thoroughly analyzed through David Greenham's close-reading technique. There is a reflection about the concept of trauma and resilience in the novel. Atia Abawai opines that the people are badly affected by war, and this has got to be resolved by the world in order to prevent human indignity and social devastation. Mostly, the middle-class people are facing these issues while the people, who have ignited this war, remain unaffected by war. There should be a global initiative to end this war.</i>

Introduction

A Land of Permanent Goodbyes is a novel which has a great impact on our real life. In the novel, Tariq passes through certain dilemmas and is therefore the representative of all those who are passing through the same trials and tribulations. The war brings numerous issues, disturbing the whole lifestyle of the affected people and results in a catastrophic demise. It is war which provokes a person to be a non-social citizen. War births bankruptcy, violence, chaos, disorder and disobedience. It indeed is a war whose effects are strongly felt long after it has ended. The current study is conducted to highlight these issues and their consequences respectively.

A Land of Permanent Goodbyes is a novel written by Atia Abawi. The word 'permanent' in the name of the novel suggests the inability of the refugees to connect to a place once they called their home. The novel narrates the story of a Syrian family and their sufferings before and after war. There are also some other characters along with Tareq who face similar psychological problems. Tareq himself is deeply affected by the loss of his beloved mother and other family members. His mental condition remains disturbed due to the loss of his family and also because of the happenings he faces on the journey. He was really in bad conditions during his journey, but finally he gets the courage of resilience and reaches his destination. The study analyzes the issues of refugees, trauma, family separation, and many other human crises through different characters of the novel.

A Land of Permanent Goodbyes centers on the life of a young refugee, Tareq, from Syria. He loses most of his siblings in war and is forced to flee to another country with his father, sister, and cousin to find a better place for their survival. His father decides to move to another country with his surviving children. On their way, they face many troublesome situations, due to which they are at greater risk of developing mental disorders, such as trauma. For analyzing the character's traumatic experiences, Freud's theory of trauma is deployed which is explained in his essay "Beyond the Pleasure Principle." Sigmund Freud's ideas about the pleasure principle and reality principle carry out the psychoanalysis of various characters in Abawi's novel. The trauma theory of Sigmund Freud is used to study the victims of war-driven refugees. Views of various other psychologists are also considered for a better understanding of the refugees. However, the study employs David Greenham's (2019) close-reading technique to analyze the selected data.

Trauma theory deals with the psyche of a person and is considered as a medical aspect in its origin. When a person suffers from the unexpected and sudden loss of loved ones, his mind becomes distressed and barren. With the observation of such people psychiatrists came up with the concept of trauma that ultimately was followed up by trauma theory.

The concept of post-traumatic stress disorder came with the survivors of the holocaust. The survivors of the Vietnam War were showing the same symptoms of trauma, which drove the psychiatrists into another concept named post-trauma. In post-trauma, the stress is mainly accompanied by the continuous flashbacks. These flashbacks are either due to the state of mind that always revels in the past experiences or as a result of facing a similar situation, like that of the past one. The stimuli can be as simple as the sound of a bullet in war.

A great psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud in his book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, gives us ideas that are contradictory to the beliefs of the world. He does not believe in the truth that science has created so far. He focuses on the pleasure principle and reality principle, the two processes of the human psyche. Freud talks about the psychological consequences that people might face when they are subjected to war. He also writes about the unexpected accident that can evoke fear and shock in these people. He termed it as traumatic neurosis.

Simply, trauma is the psychic or psychological tension that a person suffers from during an unwanted situation. A person can also suffer from trauma due to external factors in the surrounding. According to Freud, if the protective membrane of the mind is hit by a stimulus that a person cannot endure, it might lead to a treacherous effect on the mind. Freud specifies it into two, the first of which is fear, and the second is in the form of a bodily scar that remains as a constant reminder to the victim. The refugees have already faced the evil, which pushed them into the state of survival, and they always fear about their uncertain future. They focus their thoughts on the next moment of their life, food, shelter, etc.

With a broader view on nightmares and also their function, this research tends to focus on the novel's main character, Tareq, whose life is disturbed by his continuous nightmares witnessing his family dead. Due to experiencing the danger and maximal death rate in the surrounding, Tareq is mentally affected. These stored up thoughts and memory inducing nightmares gave him severe mental agony. In the novel, the characters are not explicitly victims of trauma, but there are clues for the readers that result in understanding of the traumatic neurosis in different characters.

Apart from nightmares, Tareq's hallucination of Salim in time when he feels lonely and needs his brother's support and help. Throughout the novel, Salim serves as a factor of motivation for Tareq. The absence of Salim's dead body and the lack of true information create intricacies in his mind that lead to the situation in which he hallucinates Salim. Freud calls it "perpetual recurrence" which is the compulsion of the mind to repeat experience and events from the past. Tareq is subjected to the traumatic height when he hallucinates Salim. He talks to Salim as if he is standing in front of him.

Later on in the story, there comes a point where we find Tareq separated from his father and Susan in order to save money for a better future. He is not paid his wages by his masters because of the tag as a refugee. Money serves as a major factor as it plays a trick in the lives of these refugees who are already living an exploited life and are hanging in the thread of survival. Atia gives the readers the impression that people have to pay money to escape from the war zone to a safer place. Money cannot fix price for a life but in reference to Tareq's story life was priced. Tareq already had some mental infirmities due to the loss of his family and is more likely to be affected by the trauma. The smugglers demand money from Tareq's father which raises feelings of guilt and pain for he could not afford money that the smugglers were demanding from them.

The characters experience trauma due to the corruption of smugglers who help refugees to sail across through boats. Their behavior makes them sick. People bought life jackets that were also fake. Atia in her interview with *The Guardian Weekly* speaks about the cheapness of these life jackets and says "what was striking about the island were the life jackets- thousands and thousands strewn everywhere in makeshift dumps. And most of them are fake. You could count all the human lives. The little one with spider-man figures and flowers. All those parents who took the risk, seeing the graveyards with their dirt mounds and little mounds. How people died in hope of trying to live (Beaumont).

Alexia, a volunteer also goes through the symptoms of trauma by showing her fear on the arriving of a boat each time. The reader knows about the real feelings of Alexia when she says "the joy of saving one life was always overpowered with the grief of not being able to save another."

In the novel, we go through many such events and incidents in the lives of different characters which exhibit their condition of trauma. In the end, these characters gain resilience through different

approaches, related to their situation. In the novel, there is a kind of trauma, but the characters also go through post-traumatic stress decline.

Research Question

This study is an attempt to answer the following research question:

How and why do the Syrian characters in their journey to refuge suffer psychologically, socially, economically, ideologically and politically in *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes*?

Review of Literature

Sirkei (2015) discusses the present scenario of Syria and says that an exodus has emerged due to the growing uprising in Syria. These insurrections have caused migration in large numbers to many neighboring countries. The Syrian crisis is the major cause for the great number of mobility which in turn creates humanitarian problems in that region. The major causes of the Syrian crisis are unlikely to disappear in the near future. Therefore, the writer gives the opinion that this problem should not be handled as only a Syrian issue but as a transnational phenomenon.

Yaseen and Shami (2016) trace Syria's recent history, revolution and war. They talk about the inequities, oppression and different threads of conflicts that ultimately gave rise to the uprising in Syria. They say that the refugees' crisis has become the biggest since the Second World War. He further argues that everyone is participating for their own interest and they have failed to solve this problem of the Syrian people. This could be solved with the cooperation of various countries because it is a worldwide problem.

Burgers (2017) mentions the problems of human trafficking, forced begging and sexual exploitation of the people from the war-torn countries. The miserable conditions of migrants' smuggling have become more visible in the conflict zones. People forced to escape from their homes are becoming victims of human traffickers in those areas where they go for protection from the conflict zones. Smuggling has become an integral part of human trafficking. Many refugees are victims of forced labor which results in their exploitation.

Oduola and Dykxhoorn (2022) portray the conditions about the impact of mental crisis that arises due to the war and displacement. The number of forcibly displaced people is increasing day by day with the ongoing conflicts in Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Ukraine, and many other countries. This rapid growth in the number of displaced people needs the urgency to ensure the protection of human rights, health and dignity of those forced to leave their countries. These people are at high risk of suffering from mental and health issues. People experiencing family separation by force during the asylum-seeking process experience long lasting psychological issues. There are many ways to solve these issues related to refugees. The first is to examine the policies and procedures for these people and second is to provide support for their resettlement. There is a need for social assistance to reduce the mental illness of these refugee groups.

Khan, Covington, and Gerstein (2021) describe the concept of resilience in the life of Syrian refugees. Syrian refugees are considered as the largest of internally displaced people. These forced driven people face trauma which leads to various kinds of mental and psychological issues. The researchers have conducted qualitative study to explore different themes related to resilience. They have also worked on the European concept of resilience and showed how it is different from the Syrian refugees' concept of resilience. They conducted different interviews which were based on various questions related to their experiences. In these questions the focus was on their experience before and after flight. Their life before war, during war and after war was studied.

Other factors like external resources and internal resources of resilience were also studied and they find out the results that all these factors equally contribute to the mental state of these displaced people and also in their resilience.

Yetim (2022) conducted this research to draw out the relationship between the traumatic and stressful events with the indication of psychiatric symptoms. He is of the opinion that resilience has a moderator effect on the relationship between these factors. He also suggests that people who suffer from trauma have difficulty in carrying out day-to-day tasks and they also face lifelong challenges. The aim of this research is that the positive resources related to psychological issues are the primary ingredient in raising positive results related to health in Syrian refugees.

Peerudin (2019) mentions those factors responsible for the Assad regime's failure to put an end to the prolonged Syrian civil war. He argues that the government has taken a long time to get back the territories despite the support of other countries. Assad's domestic politics of Syria is a contributing factor to ending the conflict. Insufficient economic and social means and Assad's inflexible behavior towards negotiation are the key factors responsible for the present situation in Syria.

Martikainen (2021) has worked on the dehumanization and the construction of otherness by showing photographs of various refugees. She argues about the fact that these photographs of refugees in newspapers create and construct a sense of otherness. It shows the rhetoric analysis which examines the form, content, and function of images which in turn explores the strategies for visualization of the refugee crisis. The article reveals the fact of dehumanization and humanization of refugees by the exposure of subtle visual processes on which these mechanisms work. It would significantly affect the refugees' life in their host countries and it also contributes to the xenophobic behavior towards them.

Alkhaled and Sasaki (2021) argue that we need to understand the refugees' experience to face the prolonged uncertainty in their lives. There is a need for policies which support the mental health and wellbeing of refugees. There is the basic need of policies which are specific to women refugees. An appropriate access of the Syrian women to the basic needs will design a suitable platform for these women to make them economically stable. No matter if the policies are for a short period of time, these refugees will return to their homes after the war ends.

Sunderland (2016) argues about the condition of migrants and refugees that most of them need protection and a safe place, and to be placed on the right side of the law. They want to work in a place where they want to be surrounded by their loved ones. They desire for a better future for their children. If Europe succeeded in providing all these requirements and building blocks for a better life, then it is not so far that this crisis would turn into an opportunity.

Migrants and refugees usually leave their birthplace at risking their lives to various difficulties on their way. There is no guarantee of any safety on those strange routes adopted by these refugees in search of protection and better life. The Australian chancellor, Kurtz (2017), says that he came across a picture of refugees who were controlled by only one police man. The flood of refugees was only guarded by that one person. There could be robbers, animals, rivers, big canals, and many more dangerous things that could harm these refugees physically, and can cause trouble for them. They can also face the situation of water scarcity. These are the issues that need some kind of consideration by the government.

Al abed (2017) says that many lives of the Syrian refugees are in danger. The camps of Syrian refugees face many problems, especially that of medical issues. They have done nothing to solve this problem. There is a shortage of food as well as medicine. Due to these problems of basic requirements many people at these camps die due to the insufficiency. Most of the women die while giving birth to their children. Due to the improper cleanliness issues various types of disease become common in these camps. Ryan (2017) writes the refugee legal status usually prevents them from taking employment, owning property, or moving freely, stripping them of agency. At home, they were farmers, engineers, teachers, doctors, who have not only been forcibly displaced, but also forcibly unemployed. And they cannot do anything that even looks like it might lead to permanence, like getting a job or fixing their house.

Schwaar (2015) argues that it is very difficult for the refugees to settle in a new environment. They came here with a loss of all their belonging and existence. In order to live in a particular city, they have to go through the rules and regulations of that new country. People of the country mostly do not show much positive response towards these refugees; they keep a distance from them in each and every way. People of host countries consider these refugees as others.

Bloch (2018) talks about Syria's tragedy and the humanitarian crisis aroused due to this conflicting war. He is of the opinion that the world powers need to consider the situation seriously without concern for any political gains or agenda. The war victims are living a very miserable life because they are facing acute shortage of food and medicine. The military approach would only complicate the situation; so all the nations need to find a political solution to this conflict.

Khan (2018) discusses the Syrian war, its root causes and the peace prospects. He says that the forceful repression of the peaceful anti-government protests has pushed the country into the riddle of civil war. A dictator cannot be a good ruler and the lust for power can lead a person to commit brutalities. All the nations are handling the situation but with their own lens of self-interest. A vision for universal peace has been lost. He says that we have witnessed the consequences of the Syrian war in terms of human deaths and thousands of people are homeless. They are facing a humanitarian and refugee crisis. The final thing is that the war now needs to come to an end.

Hosseini (2018) talks about themes of war, loss, abuse, family separation and oppression, but his major focus is on the refugees' crisis that the Syrians are facing nowadays. It shows how a child's life and his dreams are washed up by the waves of a sea just because of a brutal war. Through his work *Sea Prayer* he wants to pay tribute to millions of people who have been forced to flee from their homes and have lost their lives at the sea due to the deadly war in their country.

Tsourapas (2019) talks about the effects of forced migration on the politics of host countries, particularly its impact on foreign policy. It also shows how the impact of forced migration changes the behavior of host countries. It focuses on different countries and explores that they are working only for material gain and are war profiteers. The significance of these findings is to understand the international dimension of the Syrian refugee crisis and to show the effects of forced displacement on the political development of host countries.

Zisser (2019) says that the Syrian war has led to the worst refugee crisis faced by the Middle East. The conflict has its implications, not only for Syria, but also for the other countries. He draws our attention to the impact of Syrian conflict on the migration waves and explains the situation of refugees in host countries, such as Lebanon, Jordan and also in Europe. Syrian refugees in neighboring countries may be able to go back to their homes easily. They may be more comfortable in their current near places of residence, while it is doubtful for those in Europe

whether it may be ever possible for them to go back to their country. Most of these refugees do not have the intention to go back to their homeland after this war ends. The Syrian regime is not interested in their return, so they would be left as a burden on the host countries.

Ferris and Kirisci (2016) examine the Syrian crisis which has caused such a massive movement of nearly 12 million people. They also consider the social, economic, and political implications of this civil war in Syria. They are of the opinion that a universal and coherent approach is needed for the life-threatening situations going on in Syria. The host countries are struggling to cope with the demands of Syrian refugees for food, shelter, and medical care. The international community should strive for solutions to resolve this humanitarian and political crisis in a more productive way.

Tuysuz (2020) talks about the sufferings of Syrian people, especially children who are facing the brunt of the latest escalation in Syrian war. The civilians are either left for a miserable life in overcrowded camps or die. A serious issue of child protection has emerged due to the brutal crisis in northwest Syria. This violence of unprecedented scale has forced a large number of people to flee every day. They are in desperate need of life-spending resources.

Research Method for Analysis

The current study uses close-reading technique as a method for data analysis. According to Nicolson (2017, p. 184), the purpose of close-reading is to “reveal tensions and contradictions in a text and it can illuminate moments of experiences by placing them in a context of other cultures, artistic or social practices.” Ray Reutzel defines close-reading as repeated readings and discussions of text in order to increase text comprehension.

David Greenham (2019) explains close-reading technique which consists of the following six contexts/levels of analysis:

The semantic: In this level, we study about the individual words and how they make a relationship with our research questions. Many words in the novel, like empty of soul, physical pain, nightmares, give a reflection of the sufferings of these refugees.

The syntactic: It shows us how words mean things when they are put together. In this level, we study about the structures and types of sentences, and then we link them with our research questions.

The thematic: This level describes how themes emerge and affect meanings when we read a novel. We read a paragraph, and then study the whole meaning that it conveys in relation to our research questions. The novel reflects many themes of family separation, humiliation, uncertainty about their future and discrimination which adds meaning to the related topic under study.

The iterative: It means that repetition and patterning affect textual meaning. Many words or sentences, that are repeated many times, give meanings which we link with our research questions.

The generic: How the kind of work we are reading changes our approach to its meaning. It shows that the genre also affects the meaning, and we can relate it with our research questions.

The adversarial: It deals with how historical, political, and the theoretical concerns and contexts reshape meanings.

Semantic, Syntactic and Thematic Analysis

The novel is about war and its consequences on external conditions which includes both humans and also the environment. The main character of Tariq is greatly disturbed due to a bomb hit on his house. Most of his family members passed away due to that incident. Only his father, Fayed, and

sister, Susan are alive. Tariq feels distressed due to the uncertain condition of his brother, Salim, whether he is alive or dead. Tariq has suffered from trauma due to the ongoing war in his country. He has some psychological problems due to which he has horrific nightmares every night:

Waking up in his bed, Tareq wondered now if it was all just another nightmare. Surely, he believed, it was from the trauma in his sleep. He finally took in a steady breath, relieved that it was just another bad dream. He had been having a lot of them lately (p.11)

In the above lines, the semantic meaning of the word nightmare means horrific dreams. The meaning of the nightmare as a generic term is something that is treacherous and absurd.

The mental condition of Tareq during war times has been described clearly. The stored-up memory of Tareq is about war disasters, like bombing, death of his loved ones, sexual assault and other threatening situations of the surrounding induces nightmares in him. He has frequent nightmares in which he is frightened by the tragic loss of his family. When he wakes up every morning with a nightmare he feels thankful that all his siblings are alive.

“You don’t have a fever, do you?” No Mama, I am just . . . just so happy to see you! He muttered as the rubble from his dream flashed in his mind. He could again taste the fear of being separated from her.” (p.12)

There was some kind of chaos in the surrounding with the sounds of wails and the sirens. Many people were gathered there for help with tired eyes and broken souls. Tareq's eyes were full of tears and were ashamed that he was unable to save his family. As we can see the given lines as below:

He handed Farrah’s wilted body over to her big brother, who rocked the young girl in his arms as he kissed her round cheek. The tears falling from his face cleaned the dust from hers. (p. 21)

Tareq was trying to be strong in this painful and sorrowful situation because his mother wants him to be strong and determined. He holds the hand of his mother and says that he will take care of his brother and sisters after the death of his mother. Tareq was both physically and mentally disturbed by that incident. Still he was trying to find someone in his family alive. After

‘Tareq shut his eyes and leaned his forehead on the cool glass, unaware of the blood that dripped down his scalp. The physical pain was numbed by the enormous emptiness in his soul.’(p.23).

From the above words like blood, physical pain, emptiness of soul it becomes clear that the incident of family loss in the ruthless war has distressed him so much which could be a reason for his trauma. He closed his eyes to avoid himself from the reality but his soul is shattered by the loss and he has no desire to live happily without his family in a barren land.

This was not only tariq who was a victim of war but there were many people who were tragically affected by war. Ahmad, a volunteer, was no longer able to study due to the war in his country. His dream of becoming a doctor has now turned around into a volunteer. His plans for his future came to an end and he was no longer able to study.

“He examined the small toy and couldn’t find a dent on it. “How did you survive and they didn’t. “How are you whole and not them?” he fell to his knees, crying again” (Abawi, 2018, p. 22).

The analysis of the above paragraph at the syntactic level shows that it comprises many questions. The circumstances around Tareq have changed him so much and also his way of talking. The helpless and hopeless situation has made Tareq question about each and every thing. He is

unable to comprehend the situation by himself; that is why he shows his behavior in an inquisitive manner. He asks, that why this airstrike has disintegrated his family and also their bodies, but this little toy remains the same

Tareq faced the most miserable and unbearable situations after the death of his family members. This war has taken away his siblings. Their bodies were lying on the ground cold and alone, but he couldn't do anything. He was helpless and desperate and was begging for their forgiveness.

Susan, Tareq's younger sister was also mentally disturbed by this hectic situation of her life. Susan holds that toy of her sister and calls her Farrah. She does not want to separate that toy from her as Farrah was gone and will never come back. That doll survived when that bomb hit many dozens of men, women and children. Susan first smiled after that airstrike when Tareq held her that little doll. She substitutes the doll for Farrah. Susan's feeling of tenderness and love is hidden in that little doll. She is innocent and could not be able to understand that a doll cannot fulfill the feelings of her sister.

"After the airstrike that killed his family, Fayed decided that he needed to get his two surviving children out of his homeland" (Abawi, 2018, p. 30).

This decision between life and death is followed by the traumatic experiences that come in their way in the form of worse conditions at any point in their lives ahead. Fayed is justified in his decision of leaving Syria on account of the fact that there was no more life in Syria but only despair. By staying in Syria he would lose his other surviving children and he would regret it for the rest of his life. Atia Abawi says in an interview that "I was lucky that my parents made that hard decision. It was not a decision about self, but to save the family" (Beaumont). After going to Raqqa, Tariq has a nostalgic feeling for his hometown. On their way Tareq notices that the streets were lifeless and barren. He closed his eyes and tried to remember the old good life of his country with his sweet family members. This kind of thinking is a way for him to forget the reality in front of him and gives his mind some kind of relaxation from the daily exhaustion.

'It is an odor that has changed little through the ages- a recipe of dust, death, destruction and despair. It's a stench that sticks in the noses of those who have inhaled the vile concoction, and it never leaves- always finding a way to return to return in a dream, a memory or even in a time of joy, when it manages to slip forward and harass you, a painful reminder of the moments- the parts of your soul- that were stored and replaced with anguish (Abawi, 2018, p.46).

The thematic analysis of the above lines shows that this unbearable memory of war has now become a part of their psyche or memory which will time and again return to them either in the form of a dream or memory or at the time of joy and happiness. It will never leave them because it has become a permanent part of their soul shackled by war. The war has changed their life upside down. They will never be able to forget these incidents of their life which are a bitter result of war. The above lines show us how a person becomes a victim of trauma. It describes how the loss of happiness leads to the psychic tension which in turn gives rise to post traumatic stress disorder. These painful memories become a part of the victim's personality and flashes back to him in the form of dreams or in a nightmare.

Due to war the life of Tareq is now uncertain and he has no existence. He has left his whole existence and has become a refugee. Not only Tareq, there are many people who are having an uncertain future. They are fighting a battle to survive but still uncertainty exists in their lives. They have spent days without food and months without proper shelter. Many proud people are living the life of indignity and are forced to work as slave labor. They are lost and they will never have a true home again.

On their journey as refugees there was an exploitation of them economically. Everyone was trying to make a fortune out of their money. Everyone was benefiting in their own way. These people have lost everything; still there are people who are trying to grab their money.

Abu Laith nodded again to the young couple, who were now holding hands, full of a newfound energy. 'Just one thousand, two hundred American dollars per person for the rubber boat. And since she is a child, we will charge just half the price.

These human traffickers were so greedy and callous. They were not having any feelings of sympathy and pity for these people who have lost everything and even their whole existence. They were greedy and callous and Fayed was begging to take less money from them because they were not able to afford that. In this kind of situation Tareq was desperate and his dark circles around his eyes appeared more profound and deep.

Gloria Anzaldua talks about the "Border Culture" and says that it is the border of the third culture where there is a distinction between safe and unsafe. She writes:

"Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants."

These types of borders are similar to the plight of Syrian and Afghan youth refugees. These refugees who left their homeland that are unsafe become homeless refugees when they cross these borders, by land or water, in search of a safer country and life.

The word red is repeated many times in the expression of red scarf, red car, red haired plush, red tiles etc. all these expressions of the word red are used as symbols for the blood of those people who died in war. For example, a character Shayma wears red scarf to pay her attribute to the dead Syrians as Rami says,

Her hijab is art! It represents blood, blood of our people. She wears her art every day (Abawi, 2018, p. 87).

Other words repeated in the novel are life loss, death, pain, dark hope, chaos, horrified, horrible, scared, freedom, etc. All these words are used to give the readers a sense of understanding about the sufferings that these people are facing in their lives. Other words used in a paradoxical manner are pretty horrible and deceptively peaceful.

Families are forced to suffer not only loss, but also the bleak existence of living with dark hope (Abawi, 2018, p.28).

Throughout the novel water is represented as something cruel. It is represented as undulating waters, unforgiving waters and unforgiving seas. "The unforgiving sea sucked her in, separating her from her husband's frozen body."

The third characteristic is that of identity construction which can be analyzed in the statement of Tareq when he says that on arriving Greece "smiles were replaced with suspicion" (Abawi, 2018, p.267). Tareq wanted to clear his identity to the people of Greece that is why he says that

We brought our hearts, but they have been shattered into tiny pieces. We did not come here to harm you; we have come to heal (Abawi, 2018, p.270).

Adversarial analysis is one of the levels of David Greenham's close reading techniques. In this step there is a study of the political, historical and theoretical concerns that reshapes the meaning of the

text. In the novel under study there are some of the political and historical references which help us in understanding the novel and its meaning. The main important political context is that of the Syrian crisis. The novel is written in the context of this issue of war and the life of refugees as a consequence of war.

But since the war began, business has been very slow. Many people were leaving, and the rest did not have the money to purchase the few items in stock (Abawi 2018, p.13).

The crisis started with a non-violent protest in 2011 and quickly escalated into a warfare that devastated the entire country of Syria and also affected its neighbors. The crisis began as a result of the violent crackdown on public demonstration. These demonstrations were in support of the teenagers who were inspired by the Arab spring, and were arrested due to anti-government graffiti in the town of Daraa. The security forces violently controlled the public demonstrations that sparked into a full-blown warfare. It is a multi sided war which is fought between the Arab Republic (President Bashar al- Assad) and various domestic and foreign forces. They are in opposition with each other and also with the government. According to the novelist Atia Abawi.

In reality there were many sparks that started the inferno that burned a great civilization into the ashes- there always are (Abawi, 2018, p.30).

This war caused great destruction in Syria and also in the life of its inhabitants. When Tareq goes to Raqqa to meet his uncle he notices the devastating effect of that area.

It is so different. It all looks dead. Tareq scanned his desolate surroundings. Abandoned homes. Closed shops. An absence of women. "It's like an alternative universe" (Abawi, 2018, p.53)

There is another reference to the Afghan war and refugees. Tareq on his way to Greece met Najiba and Jamila who were sisters. These sisters were going to Germany to meet their uncle.

There is never a day when people do not die from war in Afghanistan, Najiba said, feeling the pangs of their loss. It's been almost forty years of dying. Everyone say it will get better, but it never gets better. All we know is life of war (Abawi, 2018, p.150).

Afghan refugees are citizens of Afghanistan, who were forced to leave their country as a result of war. In 1979, Soviet invasion started the first wave of internal and international migration from Afghanistan to Iran and Pakistan. More than 20% of their population left Afghanistan and became refugees in various countries. After the departure of the Soviet Union, many people went back to their homeland. When the civil war (1992-1996) began in Afghanistan they once again started migration to neighboring countries.

In the novel *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* all these references and allusions are given to give an understanding and a sense of empathy among these generations who suffered war and the plight of refugees. All these Afghan and Syrian refugees were making their journey to Greece. These people were different with reference to their clothes and language but their souls were connected in the expressions around their eyes. As a man before their journey to Greece says that "All of these people, he extended his arms, displaying what was in front of them. "We are all the same. But we are all from different places" (Abawi, 2018, p. 155).

Findings of the Study

A Land of Permanent Goodbyes gives us a powerful story of refugees escaping from war-torn Syria. It describes Syrians as a part of the long chain of struggles spanning through time. Although this is one family's story, it is also the timeless tale of wars, of tragedy and of strife.

The study of different characters in the novel and their sufferings shows us that war affects all aspects of people's life. It affects a person physically as well as emotionally, but the most serious danger war poses is that it changes people's perspectives about life.

The character of Tareq and Alexia gives us a reflection of hope and compassion. It shows us that Syrian refugees are humans just like us who are in desperate situations and are being forced out of their home beyond their control. The characters go through many life-threatening situations, but eventually they become successful in finding a place for their safety and survival.

The story shows us the courage and survival of these refugees and also indirectly demands for the same courage on the part of the helpers for themselves. It demands for justice and an end to violence because the best thing about war is its end. The novel describes human greed for money and power which finally results in human destruction. In Syria the struggle is between President Assad and the forces of Daesh, each one is in greed for the control of the country resulting in war and destruction. It shows us that war is bad because it brings horrible and painful situations for the people.

The characters go through many hard events in their lives even if they lose their loved ones, but eventually they achieve resilience. The story shows us that harmony and peace are a blessing so we should not take things for granted and we need to be thankful for what we have.

These refugees in their journey try to remain invisible for their safety but the writer has made them visible which allows the people to recognize the humanity and bravery of all the novel's characters. By showing their invisibility the writer wants to make them visible for the world so that they could take some positive steps for the life of those thousands of people who are looking for help and sympathy. Judith Butler (2009) argues in *Frames of War*, that literature never got anyone out of prison or reversed the course of a war yet it does "provide the conditions for breaking out the quotidian acceptance of war and for a more generalized horror and outrage that will support and impel calls for justice and an end to violence".

Conclusion

A Land of Permanent Goodbyes is a novel written by Atia Abawi. The novel narrates the story of a Syrian family and their sufferings before and after war. There are also many other characters along with Tareq who face many problems psychologically. Tareq is deeply affected by the loss of his mother and other family members. His mental condition is disturbed due to the loss of his family and also from the situations he faces on their journey. On his journey he met many other people who were both good and bad. He was really in bad conditions during his journey but finally he got the courage of resilience and reached his destination.

Atia Abawi has written this novel *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* to spread awareness among the people about the consequences of war. She offers an immensely powerful story for the readers in general to understand about the experiences of refugees. She has portrayed a grim picture of a life as a refugee to tell people about the miserable conditions that these people are going through.

The main character Tareq suffers psychologically, economically, and physically. Before he starts his life as a refugee his life in his own country is miserable due to the on-going war in his country.

His frequent nightmares were haunting him for his future life. After the loss of his family his sufferings became more severe. He was mentally disturbed by the death of his beloved members of his family. He was facing the unimaginable realities during his life as a refugee.

In Turkey, they were treated badly in every aspect. They were economically exploited despite the fact that they were psychologically disturbing people due to the atrocities of war in their country. They knew that these people had lost their whole existence, but still the people were trying to make their fortune out of these desperate people.

As refugees, they were not given proper shelter and food. Tareq and Musa would sleep under a bridge or in empty lots. They would eat the leftover food of the people at the location of the tourists. During his life as a refugee, Tareq felt that women were not treated in a proper and respectful way. He was grateful that his mother was not there with them. He was so conscious about Susan. Tareq was so depressed when smugglers kidnapped Susan. He was so exhausted that he decided to kill himself. People have nothing to do with your suffering and loss; they have to make their money. The corruption of smugglers makes these people sick.

During his life as a refugee, Tareq would see visions of his brother. He talked to him many times as Salim was standing in front of him. Salim's vision for Tareq was a kind of foreshadow of the fact that he is alive. The traumatic height in Tareq could be seen where he hallucinates Salim. Throughout the story, Salim hallucinates him to give motivation to his brother when he needs help. Alexia being a helper also shows the traumatic symptoms and she feels weak with the arrival of new refugees. The inner feelings of Alexia can be portrayed as the joy of saving one was always overpowered with the grief of not being able to save another (Abawi, 2018).

Everyone was trying to bring some comfort and relied on their life as a refugee. Everywhere in Turkey, Tareq would imagine himself in Syria. He would think that he is in Syria. Although the happiness was short-term, all Tareq wanted was comfort in his life. This nostalgic thought would bring some relief and comfort to his excruciating memories and pain. This was a method for his resilience. Tareq hides his feelings by using familial duty as a way of distraction.

As in the novel Atia Abawi says, Tareq pretended to look at the crowds, hoping to hide the tears swelling in his own eyes (Abawi, 2018, p.133).

In the same way Susan, after the loss of her sister Farrah, considered her doll as Farrah. She would call her Farrah. She thinks that Farrah died but this doll survives, which is now her sister Farrah. She has attached the feelings of her sister with a non-living thing. She substitutes a doll for Farrah. When Susan grows up, the doll is her only reminder.

Most of the people who were living their life as refugees have lost their existence as well as their families. Tareq faces the desperate situation of losing his family members. In the same way, Musa also goes through the same phase.

The people of Syria were forced to live a life they had never imagined. They have sacrificed their dreams along with their families. They were powerless in the face of the crisis. It shows us that when there is suffering there is exploitation. When you become a refugee, you are not considered a human being with normal needs. People have nothing to do with humanity.

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