

The 'Gendered Other' in Exile: Negotiating the Displaced Self in Durgesh Bailoor's *Zeinah The Princess of Syrian Refugees*

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Abstract

Life in exile is one of unending trauma, marked by a volley of disconcerting experiences. Women in exile are often the muted victims of unprecedented violence and depressing marginalisation. War disrupts and disintegrates the social order that had previously relegated women to the domestic sphere. The resulting chaos guarantees the onset of a regime of violence, exploitation and human rights violation on refugees, and women in particular. Women, as the gendered Other in exile, are subjected to an assortment of unpleasant experiences that jeopardize and uproot their sense of identity, dignity and selfhood. Their stories are punctuated with silences that articulate the angst of a defiled body space and violated rights. Shrinking space, negation of rights, and exclusion from claims to basic human needs make them invisible and barely discernable to the outside world. Vulnerable to physical violence, mental trauma and exploitation, women in exile inhabit a zone of acute human rights violation, and gendered violence and segregation. This paper is an attempt to read the fictional narrative : *Zeinah The Princess of Syrian Refugees*, in the context of gender specific human rights infringement that dehumanises and degrades the feminine self.

Keywords: Gendered Other, Displaced Self, Body space, Trauma, Human Rights Violation