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Assemblages Of Border Regimes And The Politics Of Subject Formation In Susan Abulhawa's Against The Loveless World And Omar El Akkad's What Strange Paradise

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Abstract

The research study examines Susan Abulhawa's *Against the Loveless World* and Omar El Akkad's *What Strange Paradise* through Martina Tazzioli's conceptualization of assemblages to analyze border regimes and its processes. The literary investigation of the selected novels employs assemblage perspective of borders as developed in the works of Tazzioli for the textual analysis of both the novels. It argues that the contemporary narratives dealing with borders unveil that borders are not geographic lines but are dispersed infrastructures of power. The literary analysis of the selected novels reveals that the discursive practices of bordering classify and categorize migrants and eliminate their subjectivity by hindering their mobility.

Keywords: Border processes, Assemblages, Migrant subjects, Control

1. Introduction

In contemporary literary narratives, the depiction of borders portrays the complexities of the contemporary world; it posits a challenge to the traditional understanding of borders where they were clearly understood in binaries. Contemporary literary narratives mirror the notion that border are not fixed territorial lines rather they are dynamic. The contemporary novels — Susan Abulhawa's *Against the Loveless World* and Omar El Akkad's *What Strange Paradise* highlight the struggles of the migrants by portraying the journey of the characters whose movements are shaped through border practices and restrained through border assemblages. The research analyzes border regime, and its interconnected processes in both the novels. The research study tends to answer: how do the border regimes create migrant subjects in Susan Abulhawa's *Against the Loveless World* and Omar El Akkad's *What Strange Paradise*? How do the border assemblages function to reinforce borders in the selected novels? The analysis digs deep into the texts of the novel through the notion of 'subjection' and 'subjectivation' to understand the creation of migrant subject through on going border regimes (Tazzioli 13). The research unfolds the relational border process as assemblages that function through the 'political technology' of human actors, spatial governance, legal practices to exert control on the mobility and migrants' subjectivity.

The research study maintains that migrants' mobility is hindered through border practices to create migrant subjects in Susan Abulhawa's *Against the loveless World* and Omar El Akkad's *What Strange Paradise* in the light of Martina Tazzioli's conceptualization of assemblages to analyze border regimes and its processes. The research study argues that the selected novels portray borders

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extending beyond geographical boundaries through digital and non-digital assemblages. It claims that migrants' subjects are produced through border mechanisms.

This research fills a critical gap by repositioning the text within the urgent discourse of border regimes. Susan Abulhawa's *Against the Loveless World* and Omar El Akkad's *What Strange Paradise* have not been explored through the particular framework of Martina Tazzioli. In this way, it contributes and paves way to explore border assemblages in contemporary literature. The amalgamation of the literary narratives with the theoretical insights of Tazzioli bridges the fields of literary studies, migration and border studies, and political theory. It raises awareness on the humanitarian grounds for migrants and refugees. It adds to the significance of this research in world literature scholarship, and also contributes to the global discussion on migration policies.

2. Literature Review

This review of the literature contextualizes the pre-existing knowledge produced on the notion of Borders and border processes. It also reviews the evolution of political philosophy surrounding migration and border studies in general and its implications to unfold literary narratives. This research study argues that Abulhawa's *Against the Loveless World* and Akkad's *What Strange Paradise* reveal the presence of borders beyond physical edges and the literary narratives unveil contemporary migration control operates through border regime and its processes to exert control and direct that gravely affects human subjectivity.

David Newman, in his research work, "The Lines That Continue to Separate Us: Borders in Our 'Borderless' World" draws upon the previously discussed idea regarding globalization how it was considered as a beginning of borderless world. With the passage of time, the scholarship on border studies has captured great interest of scholars. Newman mentions Borders have traditionally been seen as clear, physical borders that divide political, social and economic spaces. According to the traditional notion of geographers, the borders were considered as fixed and discernible lines that demarcated areas like states and regions. But current understanding of borders has moved on from thinking of the border as a fixed line and considers "bordering" as a process. The current school of thought emphasizes that boundaries are continually reproduced, lived, and negotiated throughout the day. They influence interactions at global, national, and local levels of social space, particularly at the local level (Newman 144). His approach clearly exposes the idea that boundaries do not exist as a physical barrier in modern times. Rather boundaries reflect in daily practices, institutions and identities. Newman's notion helps to decipher the social construction of exclusion, control and belonging rather than it being natural. In this relation, a French Philosopher Étienne Balibar depicts that borders do not only appear on the edges of territories but can be found "a little everywhere" (Balibar 1). Borders are scattered border practices in a social setting. Newman makes it evident that borders are not bound to spaces rather they can appear in ideas, cultures, and power structures.

Newman proposes a methodological shift in understanding borders. He challenges purely state-centric approach in favor of bottom-up approach that is a perspective to perceive borders through lived experiences of the individuals dealing with borders. In this regard, he quotes Lunden and Zalamans who establish that according to current studies, "scale" is of utmost significance in studying borders, shifting attention from larger spatial points to micro levels of a society within the boundaries of a state (qtd. in Newman 148). Scholars are keen to focus on smaller levels of everyday life of migrants to understand borders that segregate individuals into smaller groups and identities. As the contemporary scholarship establishes that borders are dispersed processes, here it is significant to understand the underlying mechanisms of power that makes the borders function

and regulate mobility. In this connection, Michel Foucault's notion of govermentality and biopolitics are highly relevant to discuss.

Michel Foucault provides a critical framework to comprehend how power operates in the governance of mobility. Foucault's theoretical framework shifts approach from centralized power to the dispersed power mechanisms embedded in institutional processes. Traditionally, it was understood that authority is centralized and within territorial boundaries. On the contrary, Foucault claimed that power is diffused and embedded in institutionalized structures that regulate control. In *Security, Territory, Population* marks down the historical transition by provoking a thought: "How have we passed from sovereignty over the territory to the regulation of populations?" (Foucault 378). The reorientation of the idea of power emphasizes that it is not only a rule on the piece of land rather it trickles down in form of multiple structures to regulate people's lives. Individual actions are directed by social and legal institutional practices.

In this regard, he presented the notion of governmentality to point out exercise of power beyond political systems of government to influence "people's conduct," (Foucault 388).

Governmentality is not a fixed system and government is not only politics or territorial state. Foucault's idea of governmentality refers to the range of strategies, diverse techniques, procedures, and all forms of knowledge through which individuals are regulated and controlled. It is dynamic and keeps changing its form. The main tools for this are security systems. Foucault defines it as "a strategic field of power relations in their mobility, transformability, and reversibility" (Foucault 389). It highlights the dynamic and moving nature of power in a human society that is exercised through other established structures. In involves the 'procedures for directing human conduct" (Foucault 388). The whole network of power including authorities, human actors, and digital systems, remains active to direct people in subtle forms through day-to-day experiences.

Moreover, Foucault's theoretical perspective of biopolitics is fundamental in understanding power. Foucault's biopolitics focuses on highlighting the execution of power on life itself rather than on the territory. In *Security, Territory, Population,* he calls it out as "biopolitics of human species" (Foucault 378). This very notion, according him, considers population a "global mass" that gets affected by life characteristics such as birth, death, illness etc. Digging deeper, he foregrounds this idea in *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*. He mentions that biopolitics is an "administration of bodies and the calculated management of life" (Foucault 136). The philosophical idea of biopolitics gives a glimpse of how governance seeks to regulate people's life processes by keeping it on certain tracks according to political and economic gains. In connection to migration, it is evident to reveal how their journeys are directed through policies and plans of governance. Individuals are classified in groups on the basis of legality, identity, risk, and productivity. This whole process allows inclusion and exclusion of the individuals based on certain objectives. Foucault strongly condemns the idea that power is only repressive. On the contrary, he utters, power is productive that categorizes as well as creates subjectivities. He asserts it "as a more devious and discreet form of power" (Foucault 15). Structurally speaking, Foucault emphasizes that in this form of power the focus is more on shaping possibilities to direct in a certain direction. Contemporary border practices exert power through indirect mechanisms that are also invisible sometimes.

Building on the above-mentioned Foucauldian insights of governance and biopolitics, William Walters reinterprets border control in his research article, "Border/control". Emphatically speaking, he disapproves borders as static lines. Walters raises the point how borders operate in a historically contingent manner. He raises a pivotal question, when borders are understood "as institutional sites of governance, what forms of governance do they enact?" (Walters 187). It is thought provoking to shift the approach on borders from spatial markers to the tools of governing

practices. This perspective basically becomes a pillar to extend Foucauldian theoretical concept of governmentality and power into the domain of migration and border studies.

In his research article, Walters introduces with his idea of "rebordering". He traces link from the work of Peter Andreas to unveil that globalization has not made borders disappear rather control has intensified. He writes about the complex reality of borders in present times. Borders have become selective in allowing movement. The states are applauded that the boundaries have become relaxed for transporting goods and to facilitate trade across the globe yet the security and surveillance on borders has been increased to control human mobility. it has resulted in criminalizing the undesired individuals who cross borders. Walter quotes "the importance of territoriality is shifting rather than simply diminishing" (qtd. in Walters 187). From critical point of view, borders mechanisms allow selective individuals and goods to move without any restriction but borders become tough for refugee migrants through policing. The idea that the world has become borderless appears vague from the perspective of the migrants who are politicized.

Walters refers to Gilles Deleuze's notion of the control society to comment on Foucault's idea of 'control'. He distinguishes contemporary border practices with earlier disciplinary forms of power. While doing so, he emphasizes control is characterized by "the changing topography of the border" (Walters 193). His perspective puts stress on the fact that in contemporary times, control does not function in enclosed spaces rather it operates through flexible processes that are continuous. Walters, in his research, sheds light on the production of subjectivity in the result of exerting power and control. The systems are more concerned with managing access and movement rather creating identities. He pushes this argument further and adds another dimension by logically bringing the role of migrants' agency in the discussion.

In *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor,* sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson move beyond the traditional notion of borders and proposes 'border as method'. The certain perspective pinpoints that borders should be taken as analytical tools to comprehend the organization of global capitalism and mobility. He digs deep into the idea how border mechanisms are used to differentiate among migrant and regulate labor. The authors make it clear that borders have multiplied in various forms. There is also "the reemergence of the deep heterogeneity of the semantic field of the border" (Mezzadra & Neilson 8). The authors suggest that borders cannot be understood in fixed demarcations of symbols or language. In contemporary world, everything around borders including linguistic features, and cultures come together to create new forms of exclusion. A migrant might be residing inside the state boundaries yet the exclusion prevails through culture, language, ethnicity, religious beliefs, and political affiliations. This exclusion greatly impacts labor class of migrants. Therefore, borders are not merely obstructions but they also direct the flows of labor, capital, and migrants. The authors make a point that proliferation and heterogenization of borders are their defining features in a globalized world.

Understanding the proliferation and multiplication of borders, the authors illustrate an experience of observing the world from a cab. They reaffirm that instead of disappearing under the umbrella of globalization, borders have got multiplied on different scales. To prove the point, the authors give an example of New York City taxi drivers who are mostly migrants coming from different regions and speak different languages to point out how borders are not fixed to territories but are embedded in everyday social, economic and cultural practices. They quote Biju Mathew's books that tell the story of borders: "borders that divide them from their clients and the owners from whom they lease the cabs" (qtd. in Mezzadra & Neilson 16). It maintains that borders go beyond territorial lines of physical borders.

This observation on cab driver's highlights inclusion and exclusion of the workforce in the labor market on the basis of these extended borders. In order to portray the role of state control through the maintenance of labor force, the authors assert, "the point of view of power configurations and

their articulation with capital–labor relations" (Mezzadra & Neilson 17). These words challenges pre-conceived globalization narratives of deterritorializing the world. It suggests to understand borders not only barriers but as mechanisms of regulating mobility, migrant labor. States exert power to shape migrants' work and directions. In this connection, the authors mention this phenomenon as 'differential inclusion' that is to include selective individuals in socio-economic systems with recognition yet some of them stay without rights and face marginalization. Borders function in relation to the socio-political context of power. The authors reveal the duality of borders by asserting that "borders, far from serving simply to block or obstruct global flows, have become essential devices for their articulation" (Mezzadra & Neilson 17). Borders take multiple forms in the contemporary world. The idea of borders as methods is significant to comprehend the interconnected elements involve in the processes. Here, Deleuze and Guattari's notion of assemblages is significant to perceive the phenomenon of interconnectedness.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, in *A Thousand Plateaus* write their viewpoint on assemblages that shifts traditional structural and hierarchical model of social organization towards the idea of assemblages. Together, they negate the viewpoint that systems are unified, stable, and governed by central logic. They stress upon the point that reality is dynamic and it can be composed of heterogeneous arrangements of multiple elements. They mention that "an assemblage is precisely this increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections" (Deleuze & Guattari 29). In relation to assemblages of bordering processes, it stresses upon the point that adding new dimension to them transforms the appearance of borders as well. They do not only expand structurally but also they are reproduced continuously. An assemblage is not a fixed structure rather it is network of relations between different components that can be material or discursive. They note that an assemblage establishes connections between certain multiplicities drawn from each of these orders (Deleuze & Guattari 44). A system processes through their connections not with one central governing point. The authors deny any central authority. The concept of assemblages and multiplicity helps developing an understanding of the borders not as static lines but interactive and connective processes. In this manner, Deleuze and Guattari's notion of assemblage helps in explaining Martina Tazzioli's idea of border processes and assemblages of border regimes.

A review of the existing scholarship provides a dual space for research. The review of the literature situates the novels into the realm of critical migration and border studies. While border theory has been used as a framework to analyze literary texts, it has not been brought into use in contemporary narratives of Abulhawa and El Akkad. Abulhawa's *Against the Loveless World* and El Akkad's *What Strange Paradise,* though have been examined mostly by keeping in view identity crisis of refugees in exile, trauma, psychological and emotional turmoil, and global politics yet they remain unexplored in the domain of critical border studies. In this connection, the critical exploration of the novels through the interconnected encapsulated ideas of Tazzioli regarding migration, border, and border processes will bridge the above-mentioned gap.

3. Methodology

This study tends to employ qualitative research methodology for close textual reading of the selected novels. This research intends to use the conceptual framework of Martina Tazzioli to comprehend bordering processes in the selected novels. *The Making of Migration: The Biopolitics of Mobility at Europe's border* deals with Tazzioli's perspective of border regimes that are relational. Deleuze and Guattari's theory of assemblage serves as a methodological foundation for Tazzioli's border regimes built upon the notion of assemblages. Tazzioli brings the concepts of "singularities" and "multiplicities" into the domain of migration and border studies (Tazzioli 11).

According to Tazzioli, 'Singularities' refer to the governed individual subjects and 'multiplicities' are temporary collected formations of migrants (Tazzioli 11).

The conceptual framework of Tazzioli is also significant in understanding how the border regimes are interconnected in producing migrant subjects and exerting control through its assemblages. Tazzioli also refers to Michel Foucault's theory of governmentality and biopolitics to unveil the power dynamics through "political technology" (Tazzioli 75). It is quite relevant in exploring the exertion of power on migrants' lives through border practices. In her composition, she conceptualizes the bordering processes through "subjection" and "subjectivation" based upon Foucault's philosophy (Tazzioli 13). The acts of subjection and subjectivation are essential to grasp the processes that function to eliminate migrants' subjectivity in the literary narratives. Tazzioli asserts, "individual subjects are the outcome of both modes of subjection that shape them (being subject to), and of the process of subjectivation they engage in (being subjects of)" (Tazzioli18). Subjection refers to all the mechanisms of bordering of states to govern mobility, control, and exert power. On the other hand, subjectivation is the process of becoming subjects through the acts of crossing borders.

4. Discussion & Analysis

In the selected novels, border regimes appear through several mechanisms of subjection. In Abulhawa's *Against the Loveless World*, the protagonist, Nahr's whole sojourn marks the instances where she becomes a subject of border regimes. It involves various processes of identity formation, humanitarian management, categorization, classification, racialization, legal institutional practices, political violence, spatial governance, and labor exploitation. In reference to the act of subjection, Tazzioli mentions, Subjugation is not a permanently fixed phenomenon. Detailed study of migration requires observation of the exploitation, violence and coercion which are often hidden in one another (Tazzioli 14). She makes it clear that subjection is not limited to one idea rather it works in multiple direction in complex forms under different contexts.

Administrative practices make migrants its subjects through categorization on the basis of identity formation. While exploring border regimes in *Against the Loveless World*, identity of the Palestinian refugee settlers remains of central concern. Nahr recalls how she started her life in a small apartment with barely two rooms in the Hawalli where mostly Palestinian refugees settled after the Nakba (Abulhawa 25). The spatial location of Nahr highlights that her life starts in the face of displacement. Her identity as a refugee, who has settled in Kuwait's district Hawalli after the Nakba, is preconceived. It showcases the production of migrant subject of Martina Tazzioli. Here, the migration has not been a choice. Emphatically speaking, for a new born who opens her eyes on the land of Kuwait, becomes the part of Tazzioli's subjection where a migrant individual is linked to geopolitical regimes. Being a refugee, identity is imposed over her lived experience. In the light of Tazzioli's viewpoint, subjection is not a uniformed process in migration rather a layered process and, it demands attention towards different forms of cruelties that form experiences of the people especially those mild and less visible forms that often go unnoticed (Tazzioli14). Subjection of migrant subjects often does not appear physical forms but migrants still be exploited through socio-economic manipulation, legal coercion, or structural violence of everyday practices.

In El Akkad's *What Strange Paradise,* the protagonist, nine-year old Amir, is made a migrant subject by reducing his subjectivity to a wristband in the face of migrants' classification. El Akkad writes "the humanitarian workers said every evacuee would have to wear a wristband" (El Akkad 14). Here, borders initially process by eliminating individual identity. Individual original identity remains at stake in the hands of humanitarian actors. Moreover, Amir's mother, Iman is supposed

to perform multiple identities in her interactions with other. Amir keenly observes his mother who becomes a completely different personality around different people, to her friends she was Iman, to vendors she was Umm Amir, but to the British officer visit to fulfill her duty by giving verdict on refugee status they were "sufficiently destitute to be called refugees" (El Akkad 33). Being refugees could open the door for them to rebuild their life after fleeing from war and violence. But their journey approves that only by crossing physical border they could not reach anywhere. To get the label of refugee and seek protection, they have to go through border processes. William Walters puts the phenomenon in words, Borders should be seen as a complex and multi-faceted institution, not one entity, historically they have been employed for classification, regulation and separation of people; they also have a number of other purposes and are implemented in various systems and mechanisms that go beyond mobility control (Walters 198). In the novel, borders do not only restrict movement rather they linger on to classify, and identify in relation to power dynamics.

Border regimes make Amir and his mother Iman migrant subjects through their own participation in becoming "legitimate subject of knowledge" after crossing border in *What Strange Paradise*. When Nimra El Ward who manages a detention camp on the island where Amir reaches, asks Amir his name, in response, he has to struggle to remember the name that he has opted for to become a subject. He replaces his real name with a Christian name, "David" (El Akkad 36). Examining it through Tazzioli's notion of subjectivation that refers to the idea that migrants are not passive subjects rather they actively participate in shaping their own trajectories (Tazzioli 14). The issue of migrants' identity and belonging stays relevant where a migrant adapts to multiple identities in the quest to fit in yet he belongs to none. Askar refers to migrants' struggles in the novel as "multi-layered contests within selves and others on the boat and in communities" (Askar 42). It sheds light on the inner struggles of a migrant as well as the struggles with other migrants or people they get interactive with. There remains a constant air of conflict to belong somewhere. Similarly, their discussions on the boat "If you have any sense at all, you'll never give the Westerners your real names" highlights their conscious effort to become like the host country thereby revealing their active contribution in becoming a subject so they can be accepted there (El Akkad 91). They adhere to foreign names to belong to a multiplicity; a tactic that Tazzioli refers to as the "constitutive part" of the process of subjectivation as it very strategically adheres to what is that is "desirable" in the new state (Tazzioli 50). However, according to Shortt, it is an internal effort of the state authorities as well, mobilized through "structures of fear", to maintain borders (Shortt 144). Individuals do not become migrant subjects only through the controlling practices of authorities; they also adapt to become subjects.

In El Akkad's novel, speaking and learning a language operates as a border regime. In relation to the above-mentioned analysis, it can be better understood through analyzing the thoughtful act of two women migrants' who try hard to learn English language to pass the "moral test" in order to get humanitarian protection. From the beginning of sojourn till her last moment, Umm Ibrahim keeps learning the foreign language, with the phonetic inscription in Arabic letters, from a piece of paper in her fist, to ask for her help to protect her unborn baby (El Akkad 48). Throughout her journey, she continues practicing the utterances written on the paper. She seems quite aware of the fact that she would be treated inhumanely if she could not speak the desirable language. Tazzioli reveals migrants are judged on a day to day basis through "a moral test" in order to make a decision "for being considered worthy of humanitarian protection" (Tazzioli 95). Umm Ibrahim feels bound to learn the foreign language to save her conceived child from the structural violence of border regime.

Another migrant subject, Iman puts all her efforts into learning a language right after her expulsion in the face of a civil war in Syria, revealing the institutional classification of migrants. Amir

observes Iman who spends her time watching English serials solely to learn language without any concern towards the plot. She only pays attention to the phonetic utterances of the actors. Amir was aware of the fact that the foreign accent sounded "vulgar" and "common" to his mother (El Akkad 33). Still she was bound to pass the test by learning a language in the hope of survival after starting a new life across the physical borders. To prove herself as a desirable migrant, she has to eliminate all the past characteristics of her personality that reflect her ties with Syria. Simultaneously, only by proving herself a good refugee, she could make a room for herself in the list of the migrants who could be managed under humanitarian protection authorities.

As an outcome of the discursive practices of border regimes, migrants are racialized in order to classify them. In El Akkad's novel, Mohammad, the smuggler cries out to the passengers that no matter what you do with your identity markers, names, country, color of skin, will always be used by the hosts to define you (El Akkad 145).This highlights the impact of physical borders on the psyche of its residents. As Balibar points out, they are subtly disseminated everywhere (Balibar 1). Mohammad's above-mentioned assertion also reflects the embedded and biased racialized nature of the west against Muslims that remains adamant to manipulate their existence and burn them as fuel to fulfill political gains. Further, a young passenger, Kamal, an Egyptian who gorge documents to travel is able to surprise other passengers only by telling them that he could even apply for original documentation to cross border, "How come they took your application in the first place?" Maher asked. "I thought you couldn't apply in the country you're from" (El Akkad 89). All these instances reveal the hidden ways in which migrants are marginalized that distorts their human subjectivity. The institutionalized discursive practices of border assemblages appear on each step of migrants' lives.

In the novel, basic necessities of survival like healthcare that is considered to be purely humanitarian service can be restricted to an immigrant woman and her newborn because of the racial attitude of the West. She fears, "he'd heard his mother talking with the other immigrant women who lived in the neighborhood. The conversation turned to childbirth, one of the women due in a few weeks and deeply anxious about how the local doctors would treat her and her newborn" (El Akkad 121). The conversation of the two refugee women concerned about basic right to healthcare stresses upon the nature of their experiences that they might have had on the piece of land they have arrived in the pursuit of shelter. Tazzioli asserts, "racialised bordering mechanisms affect both migrants' mobility and their lives" (Tazzioli 11). The classification of migrants does not only displace them rather it negatively impacts their chances to livability.

Migrants are not only racialized on the basis of their identities, colour, language, and past ties but also through their attire. El Akkad criticizes Western showcase of the idea of individual freedom by shedding light on the mechanism of bordering through the intolerance towards individual's choice of clothing reflected in Mohammad's description of ----- clothes as "bedsheet" that should be thrown off into the ocean (El Akkad 62). The idea of freedom of choice appears paradoxical when a Syrian refugee woman with a traditional outlook tries to find refuge in a western setting. Hence, borders keep appearing in migrants' journeys through basic life choices and cultural differences.

Scanty numbers of migrants who live usually in peripheries are considered a threat to a state's sovereignty because state itself does not give them the status of a citizen. In El Akkad's novel, to reveal the scanty numbers of migrants, Amir's mother states, "there was a smaller migrant community in Alexandria" (El Akkad 33). Moreover, the narrator portrays the miserable condition of fewer migrants who survive in Kos town: "Vänna can see rows of small camping tents that cover the soccer field. Young men duck in and out of the tents, and a few sleep outside on the browning grass, taking in the sunlight after the previous night's freeze" (El Akkad 77). Here, it is worth-mentioning to analyze it through Deleuze and Guattari's viewpoint, Tazzioli uses the

expression of multiplicity for refugees. She explains multiplicity does not mean large numbers rather, as discussed by Deleuze and Guattari, even if the minority is larger than the majority, it may be non-numerable, if its status is not based on the numbers but on social and political relations (qtd. in Tazzioli 43). The binary between minority and majority diminishes at the checkpoint when Nahr along with other members of her community try to cross border of Kuwait, while being more in numbers, they appear non-numerable in front of authorities that solely consider Ume Buraq, shattering Nahr's perception of safety in unity (Abulhawa 80). Yet their existence remains insignificant in front of the individuals managing mobility at the checkpoints.

The paradox of minority and majority is obvious in the colonization narrative of the authorities in El Akkad's novel. According to Tazzioli, these border tactics are mechanism to not allow migrants to emerge as "collected subjects" that can make the binary between majority and minority disappeared (qtd. in Tazzioli 32). In this context, El Akkad unveils an ideology through a character who presents an institutional regime of bordering. Colonel Kethros' conversation with an official of Migration Policy Office highlights the fear of being colonized of the residents/hosts as according to him every attempt of colonization started with "people on boats" (El Akkad 125). Though Lina disapproves the narrative yet the conversation between Kethros and Lina showcases the historical and political context of out casting the migrants surviving as a minority.

In the selected novels, criminalization of migrants functions as a legal tool to process border control. In the face of political turmoil in Kuwait, border regimes function in more coerced manner for the migrant subjects in *Against the Loveless World*. To maintain state power and political alliances, the ones who have been the part of Kuwait for more than twenty-five years are criminalized by the institutional authorities. Nahr and Jehad's ancestral ties with Palestine become the ultimate reason for blaming and taking revenge. It reflects through the treatment that Nahr, her brother, and the family received by the Kuwaiti police after Yasser Arafat and Saddam's collaboration reflecting the geopolitical dimensions of borders.

Political clash or alliances between states impact migrants' relationship to that state and manage the power dynamics. Under the tough circumstances, police accuses Nahr and her family, "Maybe you're the traitors" (Abulhawa 74). According to Tazzioli, it serves as a tool to "label" and "govern" subjects as migrants (Tazzioli 17). In the novel, institutional authority's unconcern reveals the hidden act of bordering despite Nahr's mother's constant declarations of love for Kuwait (Abulhawa 74). This scenario portrays the criminalization of the struggling migrants and institutional mechanisms that are there to look for reasons to get rid of them.

The presence of migrants inside the borders becomes a crime in the light of Tazzioli's perspective of criminalizing migrants. In El Akkad's novel, El Ward inquiry of Kethros' inhumane treatment of the displaced migrants in the detention center reveals the extent to which this division has seeped into the psyche of the populace as he believes that "ordinary criminals commit ordinary crimes the colonel replies" (El Akkad 95). He views migrants through the tainted glasses of prejudice. Tazzioli reflects on the whole process of criminalization by asserting that it is closely tied to racialized identities and their existence is perceived as criminals (Tazzioli 35). Hence, the law enforcement authorities criminalize migrants including nine year old child to control mobility across borders.

Though the border regimes in Abulhawa's novel function through governing multiplicities, yet in the meantime, these regimes assert control on migrant singularities through political violence. Jehad becomes the victim of political violence being part of a temporary refugee multiplicity. In the custody of police, he meets with inhumane treatment and physical injuries. He even loose one of his eyes. Nahr remembers the pain of seeing her brother "with fourteen screws in the bones of his right hand and forearm" (Abulhawa 79). Critically speaking, the torturous treatment of Jehad is not the violence towards him rather a reflection of the political violence towards Palestinian

migrants. The political violence on Jehad portrays the exertion of power to prove Kuwaiti and American alliances in the larger global political scenario that tends to undermine Palestinians.

Jehad, a young boy who aims to become a neurosurgeon becomes the victim of political violence. His dreams are tarnished because of the political situations and his past ties with Palestine. Nahr laments that Jehad graduated from high school in June 1990 and chose Moscow State University from those that had accepted him and in the past, Russia had been offering free higher education to hundreds of Palestinian students, but it was not possible after the fall of the Soviet Union (Abulhawa 60). Similar instance of political violence appears in El Akkad's novel, when Iman had to take care of her infant child and injured Amir (El Akkad 15). Even a nine-year-old child could not be saved from the political violence of institutions. Both the characters become victim of the epistemic borderwork and political violence physically, emotionally, and also psychologically.

In Nahr's scenario, border practices reduce her subjectivity as a singularity by making her economically vulnerable. Initially, she gets trapped by her friend, Um Buraq into prostitution. But later on, she opts for prostitution out of her economic vulnerability reflecting the consequences of borders migrants have to face all the time. Nahr and her family are the instant examples how even after being born and growing up they could never be the citizen of Kuwait. She was going to be a Palestinian refugee for the rest of her life there. The instability of a refugee's life has been a subject of many a literary text. Fatima Syeda et al. problematize the life of Russian refugee in their article "The Tragedy Within the Comedy: The Politics of Narrativizing Émigré Crisis in Vladimir Nabokov's *Pnin*". Though in a different context and a different place, Professor Pnin suffers from a similar regression. Never given a permanent place to live, he too lives in a constant state of exile. Syeda et al. write, "His exhaustion, bewilderment, blankness, and his helpless tears qualify his position as a man of no land." (Syeda et al 112). Nahar experiences the same exhaustion and appears as one of the economically vulnerable subjects in the novel, someone who was allowed to "participate" and "contribute" in different sectors of life but would never be considered one of them (Abulhawa 30). Economic vulnerability created through infrastructures of economy keep migrants at bay.

According to Tazzioli, Economic vulnerability of migrants is manipulated by states to regulate migrant subjects. Nahr's choices reflect how she was entrapped and regulated by this system that propagates the concept of an economically dependent migrant. After her first exposure to the world as a sex worker, she feels disgusted. Still the moment Buraq gives her first earning, she wanted to refuse yet allured by the amount that she could not earn even in a month of hard work (Abulhawa 49). Her responsibility and the subsequent vulnerability of being a breadwinner for her family regulate her life choices as apolitical technology of the state. Tazzioli asserts that states intentionally create such economic vulnerabilities for migrants as a political tool that tarnishes their identity and access to legal rights (Tazzioli 80). In this connection, Mezzadra and Neilson, in their composition, *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor,* note about the containment of labor power. They mention that labor power is inseparable from living bodies and borders play crucial role in containing that power of migrants from various means of governance and regulations (Mezzadra and Neilson 19). Her vulnerabilities and responsibilities manipulate her as a sex worker to contain bodily labor.

Economic exclusion is a form of violence towards migrants through bordering mechanisms. This violence unfolds through Abu Moathe's inhumane approach towards Nahr due to her ethnicity. He appears as a mechanism of subjection operating on preconceived notions reflected in his prejudiced stance that the Palestinians are not grateful people and therefore not worthy of trust and empathy (Abulhawa 77). He reduces Nahr to a commodity that is exploitable. Economic exclusion adds to the vulnerabilities and creates subjectivities (Tazzioli 80). A similar instance can be traced from

Akkad's *What Strange Paradise*, "he's paid up, he yelled across the deck. He's not for the market" (El Akkad 52). The moment his uncle sees him in the vessel and place him in the upper deck, the bodies around him try to commodify him.

A migrant subject transforms into governable economic body due to economic vulnerability. In *Against the Loveless World*, Abu Moathe humiliates Palestinian roots by insulting Nahr and reducing her and her people to cheap labor and prostitution (Abulhawa 77). She faces the sexual coercion at that moment because of her Palestinian roots. She is bound to subjugate in the face of the economic border regimes of subjections. Keeping migrants in a certain position of status maintains biopolitical hold on their lives. During her stay in Amman, she got a job as a cashier in a supermarket in Amman, but the pay was too low to pay for her daily commute (Abulhawa 143). She has to work day and night to earn as a refugee displaced twice. She also describes the hard work of her mother to earn basic bread and butter; she has to do the tasks in a shorter period of time that are supposed to take months for the completion (Abulhawa 87). This exploitation highlights the manipulation of art and human skill that they had to bear in order to survive. Because of her status of a migrant, she is forced to provide cheap labor to the natives of Amman who keep manipulating without regrets.

Spatial governance of the migrants becomes a tool of border assemblages by dispersing the whole community of migrants residing in Kuwait. During the stay in Kuwait, the spatial setting of the displaced refugees brings home a sense of collective migrant subjects that Tazzioli refers as migrant multiplicities. Palestinians who came from various cities of Palestine after being displaced got refuge in Kuwait. During the time, they offered their services to Kuwait in every field of life. Kuwait economy grew because of rapid development in oil industry and Palestinians participated thoroughly as labor and working class to support their living yet Kuwaiti authorities never gave them a status of a permanent resident. Nahr utters, "we were always guests" (Abulhawa 30). The authorities do not attribute them the rights to reinforce them that their stay is not permanent in Kuwaiti land. The reinforced idea of being a temporary migrant also restricts them from creating "tactical alliances" (Tazzioli 32). Though they share similar life experiences of struggle and marginalization yet they do not foster alliance to raise political voice for their basic rights. Temporary status of migrants makes it easy for the state to disperse and regulate them without any hindrance.

The refugee settlements though allow a temporary space to survive yet the process of bordering through categorizing their identity never stops. The exclusion that comes in the face of categorization, even after years of crossing border; they keep on lingering in refugee's lives. Nahr laments the fact that common people even do not let the migrants assimilate with them, reflected in the Independence Day dance incident. The fear of the outsider is such that it controls the masses' mind to such an extent that mere dance participation becomes a threat for them. This fear in the minds of the residents that the migrants/outsiders would usurp the rights of their children is what the authorities revel on (Abulhawa 31). In this exclusion, the act of subjection and subjectivation is performed simultaneously. Migrants are not only controlled as individuals through the subjection and subjectivation but also as "temporary collective formations" (Tazzioli13). In *What Strange Paradise*, the moment migrants gather in the boat they become a collective mass instead of individual beings. El Akkad's intentional expression of 'bodies' highlights their already reduced status of a living human. Bodies also come together and form a temporary group of migrants who have no collective power. Migrant passengers' existence is easily diminished after the boat drowns without showing concern towards their individual cause and struggles. Analytically speaking, the author himself indicates them as subjects of border processes from the very beginning.

Migrants are neither stable groups nor fixed entities in the portrayal by the authors. They are temporary and keep on changing in the face of bordering mechanism of control and power. In

Abulhawa's *Against the Loveless World*, Nahr utters, "we were daughters of Kuwait, even though we could never be citizens" (Abulhawa 33). At the moment, Saddam Hussein invades Kuwait, the refugee community becomes subject of Kuwait's political technology in the form of 'migrant multiplicities'. Tazzioli informs that the collective presence of migrants becomes a state level issue and they are targeted to divide and disperse to mitigate their collective (Tazzioli 29). As the idea of "the people" is always linked with the territory, it becomes the reason that few numbers of migrants are categorized and excluded. Tazzioli mentions that migrants can never be allowed to own a land, they are directed to remain stranded "without geography" (qtd in. Tazzioli 33). It happens to be an intentional mechanism of bordering where the migrants are kept deprived of any sort of material belonging to clearly draw a line for exclusion.

Migrants are excluded from the general strata of society through social discrimination. Nahr raises a concern, "most people in the country have been pardoned from paying their rent during the occupation" (Abulhawa 74). On the contrary, Nahr's family is forced to pay the house rent. Analyzing the instance in the context of border regimes, the social discrimination of not pardoning from the house rent appears as a dispersal strategy of the authorities that works through the people of the state. Newman has asserted that "demarcation" does not only indicate physical boundaries on a global map rather it constitutes different processes that categorizes and separates (Newman 148). Boundaries appear without being physically obvious between Kuwaitis and the migrants residing in Kuwait. According to him, "demarcation is the process through which the criteria of inclusion/exclusion are determined" (Newman 148). In Abulhawa's novel, the lines are drawn to cut off Palestinians through social discrimination.

Nahr faces exclusion not only being a migrant but also due to political categorization of Palestinians. The purpose of the political categorization is to restrain a group of migrants from "becoming a collective political subject" (Tazzioli 30). Hence, migrants are regulated by making them struggle of their day to day survival. It keeps them divided and hinders them becoming a political force. Border regimes function to "to divide them and to disperse and scatter migrants across space, in part invisibilising their presence" (Tazzioli 43). In the novel, when all migrants collected and started residing in hawalli, ultimately they are dispersed and forced to migrate somewhere else in a scattering manner. Everyone residing there ultimately left and dispersed. Nahr mentions the deserted streets and abondened buildings of Palestinian settlement in Kuwait as everybody leaves in the face of dispersal strategy of Kuwaiti authority (Abulhawa 79). Tazzioli depicts, "what distinguishes migrant multiplicities …. is their temporary and divisible character*"* (Tazzioli 34). Though the displaced has been residing as a community yet the community spirit disappears as they become divisible migrants who are supposed to take different directions in the face of forced displacement from Kuwait.

The in-depth analysis of the multiple displacements of Palestinians, specifically of Nahr, and her family, portray how border regimes process for refugees to keep them moving and never reaching to their destination so that they can never have a collective political presence. Nahr's mother became a migrant yet again as an outcome of Zionist brutality during the period she had conceived Nahr (Abulhawa 29). Historical and political violence are the part and parcel in the production of subject. Border regime ensures that migration does not happen as a single event but a recursive process. Throughout the journeys of migrants, borders keep on lingering even after an individual leaves a place. Nahr reflects the elimination of human subjectivity by asserting: "we packed up what we could carry of our lives: clothes, a few kitchen items, the framed photo of Baba on the living room wall, and Mama's Singer sewing machine" (Abulhawa 80). The multiple displacements of refugee migrants unfold the political technology to exert power on refugees through border processes.

Consequently, Nahr and her family leaves Kuwait, "heading away from a deserted Palestinian city inside Kuwait" (Abulhawa 81). In Kuwait, the only person who grieves the departure of Palestinian community in Kuwait is Um Buraq. Though Um Buraq grieves, "this country will never be the same without Palestinians. Look at all these empty buildings," (Abulhawa 81). This statement asserts refugee community has been the part and parcel of Kuwait yet the lingering borders make them apart. It showcase how spatial governance mechanisms of the authorities operate to disperse migrants even after they have inhibited the place for years to subjugate their sense of belonging as a legitimate residence of a state. Amireh et al. point out that "exilic experience leads to an exilic consciousness" (Amireh et al 9). Their exile from the place they owned for years make them homeless once again that give them a sense of not belonging anywhere.

The continuous appearance of checkpoints in *Against the Loveless World* mirrors the notion of mobility as a technology of government where borders create migrant subjectivity and vulnerability. In the novel, Nahr mentions, "we were stopped at two checkpoints along the way, but thanks to Um Buraq we passed without incident. She showed her ID, clearly listing her as Kuwaiti" (Abulhawa 81). Tazzioli, in this regard, puts forward her viewpoint, "the intertwining of biopolitical mechanisms and modes of mobility control enables our going beyond the spatial disciplining of migrants, taking into account the effects that borders generate on migrant lives" (Tazzioli 24). The restriction for migrant refugees and free movement for Um Buraq, clearly portrays the differential and racialized treatment to the residential of the same place. Here, border systems do not remain fixed rather they create unequal rights of movement. As Nahr sighs, "Um Buraq, I don't think we could have gotten through these checkpoints without more humiliation if it hadn't been for you" (Abulhawa 81). Tazzioli makes it clear that the purpose of restricting mobility is not only to circulate them but also to set a markup on the kind of experiences migrants are going to have based on their (Tazzioli 146). The humiliation that Palestinian refugee had to face does not come out of the distinction between 'good' or 'bad' migrants; it appears to be the response of being Palestinian migrants.

Migrants are kept in on moving state from one place to another in the face of border assemblages throughout the narrative of the selected novels. While exploring it through Tazzioli's biopolitics of mobility, it reveals to be a mechanism of border process that governs migrants by keeping them in moving state. Tazzioli mentions the notion 'not making live without letting die'. She pinpoints that they are regulated to "hampered, contained and exhausted" to work on the ideology of "making live without letting die" (Tazzioli 15). It mirrors in Abulhawa's novel, Nahr and her family is displaced time and again throughout the narrative composition. The plot of the novel contains the history of the continuous displacements and migration. Initially in 1948, Nahr's parents try to build their life in a native village of Nahr's grandmother after being displaced from Haifa. Subsequently, they flee from there in 1967 with minimum belongings (Abulhawa 29). The act of keeping them moving is not accidental rather it is intentional to maintain migrants' powerlessness.

Their bodily movement is administrated to restrain them from living as rightful individuals on earth. The phenomenon mirrors Foucault's biopolitical viewpoint that is "administration of bodies and the calculated management of life" in order to maintain biopolitical hold (Foucault 136). In El Akkad's novel, Amir and his family keep moving from one place to another without any destination in a similar manner. In Damascus, they are treated as a burden at a relatives' place who wants them to move. In the crucial time, Mona, the relative of Amir's Uncle, instead of providing them shelter she only offers "a temporary respite on the way to wherever they were going" (El Akkad 16). In this manner, migrants' lives are disrupted by keeping them in a state where they neither live nor die. Tazzioli approves it in the context of migration and border studies. She writes, these are "the specific ways of governing people as long as they move and by making them move" (Tazzioli 149). In the novel, Nahr, and her family keep craving for sense of belonging but the

continuous bordering processes hinder the way. As a result of the everyday practices of border assemblages, Nahr laments while forcefully displaced from Kuwait, "I hated that I had pledged allegiance to them in school, danced for their Independence Day" (Abulhawa 74). It eliminates individual agency to regulate her life as a migrant refugee. Sitti Wasfiye, the grandmother she insists that he would not going anywhere. she appears weary of being repeatedly driven from every place he had lived. She is displaced first time from Haifa, then Ein el-Sultan, followed by Jordan, and now Kuwait. She could not experience another forced displacement and she stresses that she would rather die there than face yet another exodus (Abulhawa 72). Her fatigue is a reflection of the forces that compel migrants to choose death over life. In this concern, Tazzioli refers Didier Fassin's notion that states biopolitics "does not consist only in the normalisation of people's life but also in deciding the kind of life that they could or could not live" (qtd. in Tazzioli 15). It develops an understanding of the reduced subjectivity of a migrant whose individual agency remain at stake in the face of border regimes.

In Akkad's *What Strange Paradise*, sea appears as a site of border assemblages where the bordering processes continue to exert control over the subjectivity of the migrant passengers. Sea becomes a mechanism of government technology that control and direct migrants on the vessel. In the train perceiving the scenery outside, Loud Uncle believes that borders are artificial constructs, a problem inherited from European ideas rather than natural reality. Beyond the windows, he sees the open landscape revealed no visible lines separating one territory from another rather he only observes the sea blending into the sky, the sky merging with the land, and the land itself, which, regardless of who claimed ownership (El Akkad 19). Loud uncle's utterance provides a critique on man-made borders that are not natural at all. His words portray nature without any traces of demarcation that is for all living creatures without any distinction yet he cannot claim belonging to any territory because of the physical markers of the political technology. In this context, in the vastness of sea, Calypso, the boat, becomes a cramped space for the migrants. Tazzioli explains cramped spaces are not only the places that physically confine migrants rather makes their life socially and politically constrained (Tazzioli 163). In the novel, the cramped space of the boat not only confine migrants through overcrowded space but also eliminates the social, political, and legal subjectivity of the migrants away.

The boat does not only confine them physically but also administratively and legally by taking away their individuality. The sea chokes the mobility to an extent that migrants are left to die without having excess to proper burial that reflects the process of their dehumanization. The narrator describes the death of an old man on the boat who dies without any sense of belonging and without land yet his dead body indicates a "leech" that makes people around him afraid (El Akkad 142). The leech is the political technology of states that makes life unbearable and death even worst. The old man who dies with a possession of nothing more than a paper with a written number with Germany code in his pocket is picked up by the fellow migrants after his death to throw in the water because they were aware of the fact that burial on a foreign land would be far more humiliating. It mirrors Tazzioli, she shares her viewpoint regarding "choked mobility" that is not about obstructing an individual's physical mobility but more concerned with directing them to the paths where they can be left to die without any material (Tazzioli 163). In the sea, the border regimes mechanisms force migrants to live in dangerous situation without basic resources to survive and shattered individualities. It brings to light that the practices of border assemblages do not only restrict body movement, it exerts control on migrants' lives by reducing their subjectivity.

5. Conclusion

The pith and marrow of the discussion is that the border regimes function in every sphere of a migrant life. It reduces migrants' subjectivity through its processes of subjection and subjectivation. The analysis develops an understanding of the regimes of control through Tazzioli's concept of biopolitical hold on the migrants' subjectivity that draws upon Foucault's philosophical notion of biopolitics. It explores the notion of border assemblages in the realm of contemporary literary narratives by conceptualizing Tazzioli's notions singularities and multiplicities, borrowed from the philosophical scholarship of Deleuze and Guattari. The analysis also unfolds that border control is exerted through the political technology of borders as significant mechanism of the ongoing border regimes. The research study has dealt with multiple means of administrative practices at work in Abulhawa's *Against the Loveless World* and Omar El Akkad's *What Strange Paradise* that operationalize assemblages to create subjectivities.

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