

Algorithmic Reduction of Migrants in Susan Abulhawa's *Against the Loveless World* and Omar El Akkad's *What Strange Paradise*

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ABSTRACT: The research study unveils that migrant subjects are produced through digital data by diminishing their individual identity through border processes. The analysis is significant for exploring the “digital–nondigital assemblages” of border practices that lead towards the reduction of subjectivity of the migrants in the selected contemporary narratives. The research contributes in the domain of literary research by deepening the understanding of the portrayal of digital practices of bordering. The research study remains steadfast to give voice to the individual subjectivity of migrants so that they could live beyond digital systems and non-digital records, and policies could be designed on humanitarian grounds rather than protecting man-made borders and alliances to maintain power dynamics.

KEYWORDS: Digital Systems, Reduction, Mobility, Human Subjectivity

Introduction

Susan Abulhawa's *Against the Loveless World* and Omar El Akkad's *What Strange Paradise* unfold the algorithmic reduction of migrants through digitalized border regimes. The selected novels have been written against the backdrop of Palestinian and Mediterranean conflicts respectively. The novels provide compelling insights into the instances of algorithmic reduction of migrants through “digital–nondigital assemblages” of border practices. To dig deep into the matter, the research aims to explore the selected novels through Martina Tazzioli's viewpoint regarding border processes revolving around digital reduction of migrants. It aims to answer: how digital border regimes function in the novels? How do the assemblage of digital and non-digital border regimes effect human subjectivity and mobility? For this purpose, the research study tends to examine scattered digital subjectivities, virtual subjects, virtual multiplicities, virtual population, generalizable singularities, epistemic borderwork, risk profiles, and the regime of visibility.

Literature Review

This review of the literature contextualizes the pre-existing knowledge regarding assemblages of digital and non-digital border processes. 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 digital and non-digital bordering where migrants mobility is governed through registrations and digitally available data, algorithms, and technological surveillance.

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Martina Tazzioli's (2019) *The Making of Migration: The Biopolitics of Mobility at Europe's border* hammers home the point that databases, systems of surveillance, and biometrics have significantly changed the governance of borders. In her composition, she highlights on the system of datafication in the context of migrants how it records their movement and governs their mobility. She depicts, "processes of datafication make individuals more traceable and, at the same time, the individual as a homogeneous subjectivity fades away" (Tazzioli, 2019, p. 68). In this connection, both the novels mirror this environment of uncertainty, exposing how immigrant families are caught between invisibility and constant scrutiny. Lucrezia Canzutti and Martina Tazzioli's further extend the above-mentioned discussion on borders and the role of technologies by adding another depth. The research study, "Digital–Nondigital Assemblages: Data, Paper Trails, and Migrants' Scattered Subjectivities at the Border" unveils the complex border assemblages. Moving beyond Tazzioli's contribution of introducing the role of technologies in border practices, in this research, they pinpoint the entanglement of both digital and non-digital means of bordering. They mention, "the border regime works through entanglements of digital and nondigital data and of "low-tech" and "high-tech" technologies" (Canzutti & Tazzioli, 2023, p. 1). It destabilizes the previous notions that only technological infrastructures govern borders or only non-digital institutions govern it wholly. This research study stresses upon the coexistence of both to curb and control mobility.

Though the existing critical literature on the primary texts engages well with migration, identity formation, refugee crisis, trauma, gender roles, and political awakening yet borders and border processes remain underexplored. That is the reason; the critical review of the works of below-mentioned authors provides a lens to unfold how borders function. Linda Shortt's research study (2021), "Borders, Bordering, and Irregular Migration in Novels by Dorothee Elmiger and Olga Grjasnowa" is a significant contribution in contemporary border studies in relation to literary narratives. This research study analyzes two German novels—Dorothee Elmiger's *Schlafgänger* and Olga Grjasnowa's *Gott ist nicht schüchtern*. By analyzing borders in the novel, the researcher places it in the broader context of socio-political dynamics of migration, identity, and spatiality. In the current literary discussions on migration and borders, Shortt (2021) brings home the point that in literary narratives, borders are not physical markers of geography rather authors portray borders as continuous processes. Shortt writes, "borders are erected and maintained through acts of differentiation (bordering) that take place in multiple locations within and beyond the state's territory" (Shortt 134). The research also introduces the idea of borderscape in the analysis of the novels: "the borderscape offers an alternative border imaginary which reflects how borders operate beyond the territorial line in ways which shape the border area" (Shortt 134). Bordering processes refer to the categorization and classification of migrants at multiple levels and places.

In this connection, the review of the existing scholarship opens new horizons for the critical exploration of the novels through the interconnected encapsulated ideas of Tazzioli regarding migration, border, border processes, and digital, non-digital assemblages will bridge the above-mentioned gap. This research study aim to contribute to integrate literary studies with border theory by adding on to the point that fiction reflects borders present in the contemporary digital age and can play a pivotal role in easing borders for the community that is already marginalized.

Discussion and Analysis

In El Akkad's *What Strange Paradise*, Amir's journey and the portrayal of her surroundings provide an insight into the whole system of control through border regimes in regulating migrants' bodies and reducing them in scattered digital subjects. Amir becomes a scattered digital subjectivity as the result of datafication in the face of displacement. While leaving from Homs to Damascus, humanitarian workers put wristbands on the wrists of evacuee children with their written names on it. El Akkad points out that Amir's name is mentioned as Amin instead on Amir on a wristband that also declares him two years younger than his real age (El Akkad, 2021, p. 14). Canzutti and Tazzioli

(2023) explain the system that label the migrants at various stages of their journey to maintain a biopolitical hold on their lives, it becomes extremely difficult for them to interpret those administrative labels of bureaucratic processing (Canzutti & Tazzioli, 2023, p. 11). In the meanwhile, the forged pages of the passport that Younis Utu shows to the officer present a different identity. Younis has made deliberate work on those passport pages where he has already placed counterfeit Egyptian visas which appeared to be realistic to make them appear authentic (El Akkad, 2021, p. 14). Though the pictures on the passport are original yet the pages of passport are forged. Further, the administrative authority plays its part in the introspection of the passports by matching physical features of individuals with the pictures (El Akkad, 2021, p. 20). The forgery remain unidentified that produces different identities in digital and non-digital systems. It mirrors Tazzioli's notion of scattered digital subjectivities through the assemblage of non-digital and digital practices. Tazzioli opines that migration phenomenon is governed by the coexistence of digital and non-digital data systems. Such interconnected mechanisms make an influence how migrants are monitored and evaluated by producing fragmented and complex experiences of identity (Tazzioli, 2019, p. 2). The identity of Amir and his family is constantly produced at every stage of migration process that turns them into scattered subjectivities.

Another instance of administrative data extraction happens at the fourth checkpoint, the narrator narrates, one of the checkpoints, a soldier asked the passengers to stand in line and he questioned them about their beliefs which turned the checkpoint into an ideological as well as physical control. (El Akkad, 2021, p. 16). In this relation, Canzutti and Tazzioli points out by referring Reiter and Coutin that "the disintegrated subject" is created by administrative measures as well as by the scattered digital identities formed by perpetual processes of data collection and monitoring (qtd. in Canzutti & Tazzioli, 2023, p. 11). It reduces Amir and his family into multiple data profiles. In the face of the scattered identities in the administrative as, well as in digitalized data, Amir becomes a scattered digital subjectivity alongside the other subjectivities who come along including his family.

In Abulhawa's novel, the protagonist, Nahr possesses multiple biographies as a migrant. Her community name is Nahr, her name in birth certificate appears Yaqoot, and as a sex worker, she is Almas. She informs that her true name was Yaqoot, a truth which was confined only to her family and a few school administrators, her hidden identity became important when Kuwaiti police looked for someone named Nahr after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein while her identification documents listed her as Yaqoot which protected her from detection (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 30). She feels lucky because the process of bordering through identity could link her ties as a refugee resident to Saddam's Iraqi regime because of her name mentioned on the birth certificate and in larger data systems of migrants. Abulhawa emphasizes, Yaqoot as a name also more likely reflects Iraqi roots (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 29). The multiple biographies, according to Tazzioli, produce scattered digital subjectivities (Tazzioli, 2019, p. 105). The extracted bodily data of Nahr's fingerprints on documents and the name of Yaqoot in digital systems of Israel and Kuwait's police, make Nahr a scattered digital subjectivity.

Nahr also becomes a virtual subject with her scattered digital subjectivity. When Saddam invades Kuwait and Palestinian migrants are scrutinized as collaborators. They are displaced forcefully. In the custody of Kuwait's police, police extracts bodily data to substantiate its narrative of Palestinian refugees' disloyalty towards a state where they are temporary residents. Police took Nahr's fingerprints to testify that her brother was in league with Iraqi authorities during the turmoil of Kuwait (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 73). This very act of taking fingerprints instead of signatures solidifies the idea 'body does not lie'. Apparently, the act of having fingerprints appears quite simple yet it goes a long way in the context of border regimes that surround migrants. The extracted bodily data reduces the subjectivity of a migrant to the data collected by subjugating her own voice to present her narrative. A similar portrayal appears in Lefteri's *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* Nuri laments, the man... asked for our fingerprints. We were being transformed

into verifiable, printable entities” (Lefteri, 2019, p. 106). The act of getting bodily data befittingly expresses how agency of a human is taken by turning him into a data. The bodily data does not only approve the crime of Jihad that he has nothing to do with. But it appears to be a mechanism of bordering to govern migrants by keeping and circulating their data in the larger systems.

On the basis of virtual data, in El Akkad’s novel, the migrants on the boat, throughout their sojourn in the sea, keep planning to adhere to the virtual multiplicities that are welcomed by the authorities of the state in the wake of ongoing border regimes. While the treatment that the migrants get depends on the classification they are part of, they take a form of a virtual multiplicities. In this connection, the migrants, in *What Strange Paradise* put their efforts in a direction to be part of an acceptable multiplicity. For instance, Umm Ibrahim says that she is bound to learn a new language to get respectful welcome (El Akkad, 2021, p. 62). Moreover, virtual data is also highly influenced from the institutions of religion. Mohammad who is an Egyptian smuggler and processing the whole journey shockingly inquires why people prefer identity cards when their purpose can be fulfilled in a better manner by bringing “a big shiny cross” (El Akkad, 2021, p. 91). The assertion and efforts in the compliance of the virtual data showcases the act of subjectivation. According to Tazzioli, multiplicities in a digital world are produced through “digital information” of several individuals that create virtual data and subsequent migrants are tagged according to it (Tazzioli, 2019, p. 106). The previous record of administrative and virtual data has revealed the nature of acceptance towards migrants that is racialized and convenient for the people of certain religions, already pointed out by the smuggler apprenticeship, becomes fear of the migrants. It is also quite evident through Amir’s act of introducing himself as David. When Nimra El Ward inquires Amir’s name, he responds naming himself “David”. The detention center coordinator tries to build confidence with Amir so that he could unfold his real identity (El Akkad, 2021, p. 81). But the memory of the virtual data makes him fear El Ward in the context of his original roots. With all his innocence, Amir does not dare to bring himself out of the categorized box in which “David” fits in according to the virtual multiplicity. It unveils the power that the authorities hold to regulate scattered subjectivities in their own desired directions.

In Abulhawa’s novel, in Kuwait, migrants are made virtual multiplicities in the face of Iraqi invasion through a virtual partition of license plates that gives birth to virtual population. Palestinians are excluded through virtual means to displace them. While displacing from Kuwait to Amman, even the larger systems of vehicle identification through data categorizes the migrants as undesirable. Nahr mentions, they were not able to take their cars because of the “Iraqi license plates” that they ordered to change, now that option is also gone (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 80). Here, the residents of the same place are categorized not on the basis of their individual identities but their ties with a virtual population and are scattered into multiple identities at every point. Tazzioli quotes Isin and Ruppert to depict “virtual multiplicities” based on the data collected are not considered as individuals but as multiplicities of the virtual data (Tazzioli, 2019, p. 106). In this manner, migrant Palestinians become subjects of many data-based identities where that cause hindrance in their mobility.

Gradual dehumanization under the umbrella of virtual population in El Akkad’s novel is also relatable. Structurally, as El Akkad’s novel has been written in the backdrop of Syrian civil war, it specifically pinpoints how the migrants, in real-world, coming from a war-torn state become a virtual population. It is quite evident in the plot, when the colonel in search of Amir comes across a couple and he reduces their suffering into a representation of a population rather than acknowledging their individual struggles. Colonel feels annoyed when a couple he takes in custody claims to be Syrian, for him, Syria is “a made-up place now” by the refugee migrants (El Akkad, 2021, p. 94). He sets his perception on the basis of virtual population of his systems. Tazzioli writes, “Virtual populations” decides the fate of the subsequent migrant groups that are produced based on “data collected from singular bodies” (Tazzioli, 2019, p. 50). The perception of the colonel comes from the virtual populations of the systems that are

tuned to marginalize a certain identities. The manner in which the authorities try to put migrants into the boxes reduces them to be the part of virtual population, entirely depend on the collected data that is not theirs, functions to sabotage their struggles for survival.

The analysis of Abulhawa's *Against the Loveless World* through the digital border mechanisms of virtual population and digital multiplicities emphasizes upon the manipulation of digital border infrastructures within the territory of Palestine. Palestinians who are without any iota of doubt are the natives of Palestine, are displaced in the peripheries by Israel. Displaced Palestinians and Israeli community are partitioned not only spatially but also virtually in the systems to control and regulate displaced Palestinians. Nahr unfolds the system of colour coded plates to mark a difference between Palestinians and Israeli within the boundary of Palestine. It works as surveillance system to keep an eye on the every movement of Palestinians. The digitally save data of the colour coded plates of Palestinians is vigilantly monitored. White plates have been attributed to Palestinians while Yellow plates were for Israeli citizens" (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 126). In this way, it becomes clear how Israeli occupied Zionist regime functions to virtually redeem, monitor, and regulate Palestinians movement after forcefully displacing them to migrate to far off places.

The hidden paradox of digital regimes of bordering lies in its gaps. Though Nahr is a Palestinian displaced refugee who in the past had residency *hawiyya* yet she could travel to the restricted areas only because in Israeli database she fell into the virtual multiplicity of non-restrictive ones. When she enters Palestine for the second time in, she was not allowed to enter. She mentions, "Bilal thought someone had made a clerical error in stamping a general tourist visa on my Jordanian travel document" (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 126). But the second time, she asserts, "my residency *hawiyya* showed up in Israel's system, and my entry therefore restricted me from entering Jerusalem" (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 146). It unfolds how individuals' movement is directed through data markers on the IDs and vehicles rather than the physical presence of the migrant tourists.

Migrants are turned into generaliseable singularities in El Akkad's *What Strange Paradise*. Vänna notices Ronis with a laptop and paper sheets lying in front of him. The narrator reveals, "Ronis looks up from the sheets of paper that have until then consumed his attention. The sheets are divided with ruler and pencil into a grid of sorts. Some of the boxes contain names, others ages, others nationalities. Most contain nothing" (El Akkad, 2021, p. 42). Tazzioli writes "the production of generalisable singularities is the outcome of the combination of anonymised data concerning the "who of the migrants and data about their conduct of migration that is the activities and strategies in which these migrants engage" (Tazzioli, 2019, p. 49). The authorities accumulate whatsoever data is available and on the basis of this, they create boxes in which they put their labeled migrants dependent on the data they have gathered. The narrator describes the situation on the shore: "the bodies have been washing up on shore all day. A mess, just a mess" (El Akkad, 2021, p. 43). On Vänna's inquiry regarding their names, Ronis replies, even the migrants who had ID cards, or whose names were written on their skin and still remained after the sea did not wash them away, still can't be fully trusted regarding their original identities (El Akkad, 2021, p. 43). The mistrust on the inscribed identities of migrants is the reflection of the suspicious attitude that has been generated through the stored data of migrants leading to misclassification.

For the authorities, the living and dead bodies of migrants become data to put in the system. A depiction from the novel that solidifies the stance is the portrayal of Madame Nimra El Ward's office. She has come there as an immigrant. Apart from being Vänna's French teacher, she is also a coordinator at the local migrant detention center. When Vänna and Amir, in his hope of survival reach her office, they find "some bulging with testimonials and photographs and notarized government documents, others completely empty. Each folder is labeled with a long identification number" (El Akkad, 2021, p. 80). An individual is saved in data as codes that a state can reach out through indexing tools but the data does not contain any of the migrants' complex stories of reaching the Island.

Migrants are turned into virtual population through data records that remain irrelevant to the original selves of the migrants. According to Tazzioli, generalization of migrants serves to hide the uniqueness of the experiences and identities of individual migrants by turning them into an abstract “virtual population” that “works as a blueprint for partitioning migrants” (Tazzioli, 2019, p. 49). The testimonials and identification numbers divides the migrants into singularities that determine how they are going to be dealt by the authorities. Amir is chased mercilessly by Kethros because according to the system, he falls into the category of illegal. In Akkad’s novel, El Ward informs Vanna, “they come here, they apply for—I don’t know— passports?” (El Akkad, 2021, p. 83). The main concern lies in how the process of applying works. Undesirable refugee migrants are bound to face difficulty to get passports under the pretext of online processes on the basis of the generalisable singularities.

Politicization of the digital processes restricts the safety and mobility of the migrants without considering the individualities. Kamal, the passenger on the boat, shares his unsuccessful attempts that he made for three years to legally obtain the status of a refugee migrant. Though he fulfilled all the requirements and documentation time and again yet his application got rejected each time. His multiple efforts to address the issue through proper channel resulted in vain because of the minor issues like a blank box of the application form. Even it was irrelevant under his given circumstances that he tried to negotiate (El Akkad, 2021, p. 89). Kamal’s exclusion as an Egyptian does not come from physical borders but through politicized digital processes. Kamal’s failure provides a critique of digitally managed systems that prioritize unnecessary digital accuracy over a living creature’s miseries. Ultimately, Kamal takes an illegal path by forging a green card, “Kamal took a small green card out of his wallet and handed it to Maher” (El Akkad, 2021, p. 89). He continues to go through a dangerous path on the boat. Walters points out, “technology, control expresses little interest in shaping the identity, moulding the subjectivity of its targets” (Walters, 2006, p. 198). Kamal’s situation and his interaction with systems showcase the inherent structure of digital assemblages that are designed to direct according to the preferences of power holders.

The similar phenomenon appears in Abulhawa’s novel, when Nahr decides to go to Palestine, “Yasser Arafat got a Nobel Prize, an actual airport was being built in Gaza, and real Palestinian passports were being issued” (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 94). She has to wait for six hours because her details do not appear in Israel’s system. The narrator reveals, “they would not accept the Palestinian ID that Jihad had worked hard to reinstate because it did not appear in their system. They said this was not uncommon because it takes time for new *hawiyas* since the Oslo Accords to update in their system. Hours later, they stamped my Jordanian travel document with a three month tourist visa” (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 108). On the one hand, it makes her a scattered digital subject through digital systems; on the other hand, it dehistoricizes Nahr and her family’s native ties with Palestine by just not appearing in the system. Nahr informs, “but Israel revoked Jihad’s *hawiyya* and put his and Mama’s names on a visa blacklist” (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 84). During the time in Cube, when Nahr was all alone across border, and she was in dire need of her family support, her family is restricted through digital regime of bordering specifically of the migrants who have Palestinian roots. Without considering Nahr’s mother’s struggles as a displaced refugee of Palestine, her entry is restricted, and the manipulation is done through digital systems of bordering.

Digging deep into the struggles of Nahr and her family to return to their own native country after being displaced and living a life of refugee migrants, they meet with “epistemic borderwork”. Canzutti and Tazzioli explain, “epistemic borderwork” that has been termed as “epistemic injustice” by Ficker leads towards recognizing the concept of digital injustice (Canzutti & Tazzioli, 2023, p. 10). Border violence is perpetrated through injustice. Border, for the whole family in Abulhawa’s novel, is not only the walls and border administration, but also the digitalized negation of a returnee migrant’s legal claim that creates the asymmetries of credibility. This very technologization is manipulated by Israeli regime to restrict Palestinians refugee migrants.

In the light of above-mentioned discussion, Israeli Zionist regime manipulates digital practices of bordering by employing it as a tool to rupture the past ties of natives of Palestine. It reflects when Sitti Wasfiyeh after being refugee for years, hopes to cross border of Palestine to live and die in her own country. Wasfiyeh cries out to go to her country on a visitor's visa through Israeli immigration system (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 94). She laments the system that does not preserve the history of an individual and is manipulated by Israeli authorities. Lucrezia and Tazzioli undo the very presentism lying underneath digital border processes that actually dehistoricizes the past of the migrants. They assert, Journalists and academics depict the border regime as digital and technology-centric but the idea is partly at odds with what is actually visible on the ground and reduces technologization of the border regime to "a dehistoricized present" (Canzutti & Tazzioli, 2023, p. 2). The emotional turmoil of the grandmother in the face of the erasure of her past life in Palestine through digital mechanisms of border processes is obvious. The idea of presentism adds more scattered subjectivities for migrants like Wasfiyeh. They befittingly maintain that the technological methods of identification have never been used in isolation and on their own have not been sufficient to establish the identity of a person (Canzutti & Tazzioli, 2023, p. 5). In the context of Wasfiyeh, digital processes make her non-existent as a native of Palestine and dehistoricizes her past ties.

Nahr, being a risk profile, becomes a site of epistemic borderwork where the cube becomes an extension of border and a site for biopolitical hold to exert power. In this connection, Walters extends Foucault's idea of 'the carceral archipelago' to border studies. In the domain of migration and border studies, he quotes Foucault, Disciplinary techniques, according to Foucault, connected institutions like schools, prisons and workhouses in a network of control and regulation that he termed the "carceral archipelago" (qtd. in Walters, 2006, p. 197). While Foucault has used it as a metaphor for mirroring biopolitical hold, it befittingly provides its essence in the context of Nahr's carcerality that stands for obstructing her mobility.

In Cube, she is reduced to prisoners' data through technological and administrative surveillance and high-risk confinement. Moreover, the cube, where she is prisoned, is governed by "border regime works through entanglements of digital and nondigital data and of 'low-tech' and 'high-tech' technologies" (Canzutti & Tazzioli, 2023, p. 1). The cube, prisoner cell of Nahr that is a small room yet it is technologically automated that reflects through its cube structure. Nahr asserts, "visitors and guards have told me that the Cube is a technological marvel" (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 64). Tech surveillance within the boundaries of cube is the mechanism of monitoring to control mobility. She unveils the presence of "a black eye" in the roof of her cube that is a surveillance tool and monitors everything she does (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 136). She further portrays that her mobility within the walls of the cube is restricted with the help of "robotic innards" (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 84). They help in constantly tracking and monitoring her spatial location even in confinement. These high-tech technologies hinder the mobility of Nahr that is in reality, depiction of all the Palestinian's immobility who has been displaced even within the physical edges of Palestinian borders.

The assemblage of non-digital and digital systematic processes becomes a force to obstruct migrants in El Akkad's novel. El Ward reminds Colonel Kethros that she has managed a detention camp stuffed with migrants far more the capacity of the center "and all of them are owed a day's drinking water" (El Akkad, 2021, p. 94). The basic human necessities to survive become a luxury to possess through processes in the hands of regulating authorities. On El Ward's inquiry to Kethros regarding water supplies, he inhumanely replies, "did you fill out the requisition forms properly?" Madame El Ward grabs a sheet of paper off her desk and holds it up. "Of course I filled it out properly. Every day 'properly' changes, and every day I still fill it out properly" (El Akkad, 2021, p. 95). Data systems are manipulated to regulate. Forms become a tool to get off with the presence of migrants. In this regard, Tazzioli quotes D'Armes. The mayor of Calais, Natascha Bouchart to highlight the reason for delaying the availability of food and water, she states, there should not be a providence of edibles and the people who bring should be discouraged to

restrict the places turning into migrants' "fixation points" (qtd. in Tazzioli, 2019, p. 162). Kethros intentional delay in the providence of water is a practice of political technology of state to regulate migrants' arrival.

Amir as a migrant is reduced to a risk profile among generalizable singularities in the context of governmentality through digitalized bordering mechanisms. He is a young child who is forcefully displaced and later on, gets on the boat through the manipulation of the smugglers. It hammers home the thought process of the authorities for dehumanizing a young child Amir. Emphatically speaking, on humanitarian grounds, El Ward tries to protect Amir from becoming a risk profile by letting him go with the young girl. She asserts "by law he has to come here. The ministry would fire me if I..." (El Akkad, 2021, p. 83). The detention center is the place where the process of extracting and assembling data happens. El Ward informs Vänna regarding the inherent procedures of detention camps that dehumanize migrants through the process of sorting. A few get passports and others are left to become ghosts through never ending wait. El Ward requests Vänna: "I want you take this boy somewhere" (El Akkad, 2021, p. 83). El Ward, more than anything else, is reluctant to see a young boy reducing to a data point of ghost migrants. She has already identified his belonging to a virtual multiplicity who would not be welcomed on the island as a refugee migrant.

El Ward is the one who has witnessed migrants getting ripped off their individual identities in the process of applying for asylums while waiting in detention center. According to Tazzioli, the system categorizes migration flows and their behavior, country of origin, and their legal status, including as asylum seekers, refugees or illegal in contrast to establish fixed risk categories (Tazzioli, 2019, p. 48). The ones who apply for passports in detention centers and do not get their application accepted, they are turned into ghosts only by removing from the data of databases. El Ward informs that Amir could only have a "chance" of survival if he could be protected from entering systems (El Akkad, 2021, p. 85). El Ward's statement is evident in unfolding the dilemma of migration regulatory systems that is not able to make migrants' lives safe rather it exposes them to more harsh circumstances.

The formal systems of immigration processes are politicized on the basis of alliance and decide the fate of a migrant through detention and deportation without considering its impact on the life of a migrant. Tazzioli refers to Jacobsen and Sandvik who are of the view that the involvement of digital systems has caused "new risks" for refugee migrants instead of providing safety (qtd in. Tazzioli, 2019, p. 118). Migrants' fear of cancellation of their applications exhorts them forge documents or take routes that make their condition even worst. The narrator, in the novel, mentions the situation of Amir's neighborhood, to save their life at a safe place, they even forge travel documents (El Akkad, 2021, p. 55). They do so to save themselves from becoming miserable subjects through digital processes of assemblages.

Human suffering is multiplied through the fractures lies between digital data and human mobility in El Akkad's novel. The novelist takes a dig of the numerical system of keeping record by mocking the coast guard's inaccurate count of the dead bodies of migrants. He writes the count as an "abstraction as the dead themselves are to the people who live here" (El Akkad, 2021, p. 11). But when Vänna reaches the beach, she sees a whole infrastructure of digital and non-digital resources to record migrants: it includes coast guards, police, and army officers along with the presence of satellite phones and technological devices. Though the presence of authorities and "satellite phones, printers, and fax machines showcase the efficiency of the system yet it fails to cope up with the individuality of migrants and their vulnerabilities (El Akkad, 2021, p. 42). The critical analysis of the site exposes the superficial nature of the whole system of digital and administrative mechanisms to engage on a humanitarian level.

There remains a stark difference between the seemingly efficient work involving digital tools and humanitarian actors, and the actual work that is consist of gaps. But when Vänna approaches Ronis, an officer, he does not find

any data. She inquires, "Can you look up a name for me?" Vanna asks. "Huh?" "Utu. Is there anyone called Utu on the list?" Ronis looks at his notes and then the computer screen and replies "I don't think so" (El Akkad, 2021, p. 43). It clearly mirrors the gaps in digital data of migrants who cross border alive or dead and the actual body movement. Tazzioli stresses to pay attention to fragmented discontinuity among digital data and the real time bodily movement to understand control (Tazzioli, 2019, p. 26). To wit, Amir whose data is not available yet his body movement does not stop. Rather he becomes an unaccounted subject and categorized as illegal migrant that reduces his individual subjectivity.

Migrants only become statistical data in the larger systems of databases for the administrated authority and workers to regulate migrants. The thing that remains of their interest is land.

When Lina Eliades, an official in the Ministry of Migration policy:

The only thing we ask for is accurate numbers.

"One hundred and twenty-four."

"No unaccounted for?" Lina asks.

"You want me to dredge the seafloor?" the colonel replies.

"The government doesn't care about the seafloor, the government cares about the land. No unaccounted for on the island?"

The colonel says nothing. Lina repeats her question.

"No," Kethros replies. "No unaccounted for on the island" (El Akkad, 2021, p. 126).

Here, on paper trails, migrants become a numerical digit without raising concerns over individual subjectivity and struggles of the migrants who started their sojourn with the hope of survival and new beginnings.

The regime of visibility and invisibility plays a significant role in reducing migrants in digital databases who try to cross border illegally on a vessel through the intentional invisibility. De Genova enlightens on the technological advancements in the maritime space to actively monitor. He emphasizes the technologically well-equipped maritime space that have all the latest means to track and monitor any mobility in the sea and transforming the bodily upheavals "into digital data" that decides "visibility" according to the set criteria of maintaining record (De Genova, 2017, p. 109). Yet the surveillance systems fail to monitor the drowning of the boat. Instead of capturing the situation to save lives, the systems determine what is going to be recognized based on the programming. The visibility of the migrants in the sea through technological and digital mechanisms is highly influenced by authorities' responses and viewpoints regarding migrants.

The contradiction lies in the manner authorities observe migratory event and the way it is presented in databases. Whatever the case may be, consequently, the migrants are shown through a dot indicating boat to visualize data in the systems. Tazzioli asserts that migrants as individuals as well as part of a multiplicity are vanished in the portrayal of the event. Only the boat turned into a dot is shown "on the digital map" (Tazzioli, 2019, p. 134). In the novel, the treatment of the forces including administration, coastguards, colonel Kethros approves the above-mentioned claim through their treatment of the living and dead migrants. For the authorities, "all the shipwrecks of the previous year are a single shipwreck, all the bodies a single body" (El Akkad, 2021, p. 11). The significance of an individual's life and sufferings turns to none other than a dead body that stands somewhere as a dot in a map in the world databases of migrants.

The intentional acts of visibility and invisibility do not pay attention to individual identities and their struggles as refugee but capture only the photos of the boat, a crowd crossing borders in order to indicate an event in the databases keeping records of mobility around borders. Akkad portrays the situation where bodies of migrants are laid covered and a crew of television news and journalists with their cameras capture the scene by positioning themselves in the center but turning “their backs to the carnage” (El Akkad, 2021, p. 11). The scene presents a critique on media coverage of the human tragedy. The narrator raises his concern over the dramatic media portrayal of migrants crossing borders packed on a boat, hiding from the coast guards, going through dangerous paths (El Akkad, 2021, p. 39). The portrayal of the migrants is crucial in setting the perception of common people regarding migration and migrants. The perception of the people decides the way they would be treating them. Tazzioli writes that even a smaller number of migrants are portrayed in a media through the angles that presents an emergency situation (Tazzioli, 2019, p. 31). The media depiction, on the contrary, inculcates the idea that migration is a threat to the security of people and the state.

Furthermore, administrative and legal authorities work mechanically to dehumanize a young child putting it into the domain of illegal. Colonel Kethros threatens to El Ward, “don’t make me have you arrested for helping an unregistered illegal” (El Akkad, 2021, p. 96). It appears on the data screen as a crossing crime by mitigating the identity and agency of the migrant: Tazzioli mentions that the visual screen of EUROSUR, “is a map of coloured dots” that only reflect that a “migratory event” happened at a certain point through illegal means (Tazzioli, 2019, p. 136). The drowning of the boat with overcrowded migrants who kept waiting for help and being seen highlights the procedural designing and technical infrastructures of digital systems that operate to dehumanize migrants.

The above-mentioned discussion also hammers home the point that state’s policies do not cater to the individual subjectivities rather they believe more in collecting data and tracking numbers. State’s preferences are evident through the analysis of an instant in Akkad’s novel: Lina Eliades who is an administrator with the Ministry of Migration Policy, her job is to track irregular movements of migrants (El Akkad, 2021, p. 123). Most of the entries are those migrants who try to enter the state in the pursuit of safe shelter. El Akkad provides a critique of the preferences of the administrators who appear keen towards getting and maintaining data to know the passages of boats only for the sake of surveillance and governing mobility on the borders. The novel unfold that Lina performs duty regarding refugee migrants only by accumulating data in coordination with local systems about the number of “living” migrants and “taking guesses” about exact numbers of the migrants who have died (El Akkad, 2021, p. 124). The officer offers no services for the safety and well-being of migrants but only keeps the inaccurate count of the migrants. To understand this in a real-world scenario, Tazzioli confirms through her composition that EUROSUR’s is not supposed to check on migrants but to gather data from resources “to make the migration phenomenon governable” (Tazzioli, 2019, p. 137). The major goal of the digital databases of the border regimes is to govern mobility not to cater migrants’ upheavals.

The regime of invisibility is one of the reasons for not considering the individual presence of Amir across the border, also for not reaching for help of the drowning boats while the passenger, Kamal calls coast guard and Mehar, a Palestinian migrant speaks to them to inform and request for help after being “stranded” (El Akkad, 2021, p. 156). What the passengers really hoped for is a border free help to secure them. Kamal makes an effort by making a phone call, “some assumed it was a national coast guard, or perhaps whatever arm of the United Nations was supposed to deal with such things. Or maybe it was a private charity, something like Doctors Without Borders or the Christian groups that took on the names of saints and angels (El Akkad, 2021, p. 157). Yet they remain invisible to surveillance systems. It portrays a heart-wrenching situation and a stark critique of the modern days advanced border regimes and surveillance mechanisms. Through the regime of visibility, Tazzioli criticizes such intentional invisibilities of the systems. She emphasizes that it might be possible that some boats remain invisible due to “technical glitches but

some boats are intentionally “left to die” because state does not want to get involved (Tazzioli, 2019, p. 136). The understanding of the regime of visibility reveals the assemblages of the border regimes do not function to cater migrants’ individuality and suffering.

Conclusion

The submission of the whole discussion is that migrants go through algorithmic reduction through the “assemblage of digital and nondigital” bordering processes. The analysis digs deep into the processes of reducing migrants into digital data after coming in contact with administrative and digital border regimes. In this concern, the research examines the selected novels through Martina Tazzioli’s theoretical approach regarding border regimes surrounding migrants’ mobility. The analysis has explored scattered digital subjectivities, virtual subject, virtual multiplicities, virtual population, generalizable singularities, epistemic borderwork, and regime of visibility and invisibility that work hand in hand to reduce migrants into data and numbers. The research study remains steadfast to give voice to the individual subjectivity of migrants so that they could live beyond digital systems and non-digital records, and policies could be designed on humanitarian grounds rather than protecting man-made borders and alliances to maintain power dynamics.

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