

DOKUZ EYLUL UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN CULTURE AND LITERATURE
AMERICAN CULTURE AND LITERATURE PROGRAM
DOCTORAL THESIS
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

**BIO/NECRO-POLITICS IN AMERICAN REFUGEE
LITERATURE**

Asila ERTEKİN

Danışman
Doç. Dr. Esra ÇÖKER

2025

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this doctoral thesis titled as “BIO/NECRO-Politics in American Refugee Literature” has been written by myself in accordance with the academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that all materials benefited in this thesis consist of the mentioned resources in the reference list. I verify all these with my honour

18/03/2025

Asila ERTEKİN



ABSTRACT
Doctoral Thesis
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
Bio/Necro-politics in American Refugee Literature
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Department of American Culture and Literature
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The escalation of civil wars and political conflicts in recent years has intensified the global refugee crisis, rendering the irregular onward movement of displaced populations less a matter of policy control than a complex reality. Shaped by security-oriented discourses, the responses of Western states have contributed to the emergence of what can be called a temporally and spatially unbounded “state of exception” -- a condition in which legal laws and established orders are suspended in favor of discretionary, often exclusionary, measures. In such frameworks, the human dimension of displacement is frequently overlooked, as the precarious journeys undertaken by refugees --often as a last resort and a survival strategy --are reduced to issues of control, risk or illegality, rather than being understood within the broader context of forced mobility and existential necessity. Through a critical reading of Atia Abawi’s *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes*, this study explores how the displaced are transformed into figures of homo sacer, as conceptualized by Giorgio Agamben, through necropolitical mechanisms that reduce them to “bare life.” Drawing on Michel Foucault’s concept of biopolitics, Achille Mbembe’s concept of necropolitics, and Giorgio Agamben’s state of exception, this thesis will trace the journeys and experiences of the characters in *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* in order to explore how both host and home states contribute to this process, revealing the entangled roles of exclusion, abandonment, and sovereign power. In doing so, this study will also highlight how these refugees find themselves trapped in a juridical limbo,

stripped of political recognition and legal protection --and denied the possibility of a dignified existence, first through the sovereign abandonment in their homeland, then through border regimes of host nation-states.

Keywords: Bio-Politics, Necro-Politics, Refugees, American Refugee Literature.



ÖZET
Doktora Tezi
Amerikan Mülteci Edebiyatında Biyo/Nekro-Siyaset
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Son yıllarda iç savaşların ve siyasi çatışmaların zirveye tırmanması, küresel mülteci krizini daha da şiddetlendirmiş ve yerinden edilmiş nüfusların düzensiz hareketlerini, bir politika kontrolü meselesinden ziyade karmaşık bir gerçekliğe dönüştürmüştür. Güvenlik odaklı söylemlerle şekillenen Batılı devletlerin tepkileri, zamansal ve mekansal sınırları olmayan bir “istisna hali”nin ortaya çıkmasına katkı sağlamıştır—yani, yasal düzenlemelerin ve yerleşik sistemlerin askıya alındığı, yerlerini çoğu zaman dışlayıcı ve keyfi uygulamalara bıraktığı bir durum. Bu tür çerçevelerde, yerinden edilmenin insani boyutu sıklıkla göz ardı edilir; çünkü mültecilerin —çoğu zaman son çare olarak ve bir hayatta kalma stratejisiyle üstlendikleri— kırılgan yolculukları, zorunlu hareketlilik ve varoluşsal bir zorunluluk bağlamında değil, daha çok kontrol, risk ya da yasa dışılık meselesi olarak ele alınır. Atia Abawi’nin *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* adlı eserinin eleştirel bir okumayla incelendiği bu çalışmada, Giorgio Agamben’in kavramsallaştırdığı *homo sacer* figürü aracılığıyla, yerinden edilmiş bireylerin nekropolitik mekanizmalarla nasıl “çıplak hayata” indirgendikleri analiz edilmektedir. Michel Foucault’nun biyopolitika, Achille Mbembe’nin nekropolitika ve Giorgio Agamben’in istisna hali kavramlarından yararlanan bu tez, *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* eserindeki karakterlerin yolculukları ve deneyimleri üzerinden, hem ev sahibi hem de anavatan devletlerin bu sürece nasıl katkı sağladığını izlemektedir. Böylelikle, dışlama, terk edilme ve egemen iktidar ilişkilerinin iç içe geçmiş rolleri açığa çıkarılmaktadır. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda mültecilerin, politik tanınırlık ve

hukuki korumadan mahrum bırakılarak hukuki bir boşlukta sıkıştıklarını, önce kendi ülkelerindeki egemenin onları terk etmesiyle, ardından ev sahibi ülkelerin sınır rejimleri aracılığıyla onurlu bir yaşam olanağından da yoksun bırakıldıklarını ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır

Anahtar Kelimeler: Biyo-siyaset, Nekro-siyaset, Mülteciler, Amerikan Mülteci Edebiyatı.



BIO/NECRO-POLITICS IN AMERICAN REFUGEE LITERATURE

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ABBREVIATIONS

CRC	The Convention on the Rights of the Child
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IHRL	International Human Rights Law
ILO	International Labor Organization
IOM	The International Organization for Migration
IR	International Relations
IRL	International Refugee Law
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RMX	“Remain in Mexico”
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNODC	The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

INTRODUCTION

“The birth of a global risk consciousness is a trauma for humanity” says Ulrich Beck (341: 2006). As Beck highlights, the risk consciousness that has dramatically amplified in recent decades has heightened the importance of security discourses, trapping people in a pervasive state of anxiety, fear and precarity. For that reason, recently, the refugee experience has emerged as one of the preponderant humanitarian and political crises of the twenty first century. Although displacement is not a new phenomenon, the scale, visibility, and complexity of forced migration in today’s globalized world render it a uniquely urgent matter to scrutinize. The refugee crisis is not merely an accidental side effect of contemporary geopolitics; rather, it is one of the most pivotal consequences of “reflexive modernity” in the sense Ulrich Beck defines. The displacement of millions, therefore, must be seen not only as a symptom of civil wars, political oppression, and regional instability but as a result of global political and economic order largely orchestrated by powerful and dominant Western states. Ironically, these same states now struggle with the exacerbating influx of refugees, whose presence is perceived both as a humanitarian burden and as a threat to national security and social order.

This double-bind results in a tension between state security and human security as two distinct concepts that can be regarded as mutually exclusive. While human security prioritizes the dignity, safety, and well-being of individuals, state security makes an emphasis on the protection of territorial sovereignty, political and social stability, and national identity. In the shadow of the so-called ‘War on Terror,’ the securitization discourses have intensified dramatically particularly after September 11 attacks in the U.S. Fear of the Other has become the prevalent issue in international level. Thus, the racialized, religious, and cultural other in the insider-outsider dichotomy has become an affective and political tool for justifying increasingly harsh border controls and refugee regime. This ideological division has led to what Giorgio Agamben calls a “permanent state of exception,” where law and the normal order is suspended in the name of security while sovereign power performs unchecked consequently. Within this framework, media representations play a crucial role. Mainstream media in many Western countries mostly depicts

refugees as threatening and chaotic masses difficult to control, thereby increasing fear and legitimizing exclusionary policies. The language of invasion, crisis, and disorder pervades public discourse, facilitating policies that disregard the rights enshrined in internationally recognized 1951 Refugee Convention. Despite its commitment to protecting those fleeing persecution, many contracting states systematically violate the Convention by imposing extended asylum procedures, erecting physical and bureaucratic borders, and implementing strict surveillance regimes.

Moreover, those fleeing civil war or political persecution may find themselves legally excluded from refugee status due to changing interpretations of international law. Others may escape immediate violence only to encounter new forms of exploitation and marginalization in transit or host countries. In either case, displaced individuals remain trapped in a condition of precarity, stripped of political agency and relegated to bare life, which is a term Agamben uses to describe “*lives that may be killed but not sacrificed*”, lives that are biologically present but politically invisible (Agamben, 53: 1998). This process of dehumanization and exclusion is not limited to border zones or refugee camps; it also pervades host societies at the same time. The rise of nationalist and xenophobic sentiments across Europe and elsewhere in the west has led to widespread discrimination, economic exploitation, and social alienation. Refugees are frequently reduced to cheap labor, denied access to social services and resources, and blamed for unemployment by the locals. At the same time, their suffering is often instrumentalized for political purposes, transformed into a spectacle of ‘moral panic’ or humanitarian pity without any real engagement with the structural forces that produced it.

Given the complexity and urgency of these issues, it is no surprise that refugee studies have become a dynamic field that intersects with sociology, media studies, political theory and international relations, and, increasingly, literature. The growing body of refugee literature, encompassing novels, short stories, poetry, and drama, represents a crucial field for the articulation of refugee voices, perspectives, sufferings and experiences. These works do more than narrate the trauma of displacement; they also serve as counter-discourses that challenge dominant representations, foster empathy, and reassert the humanity of those deemed

disposable. Among the most compelling examples of this genre is Atia Abawi's *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes*. As a journalist of Afghan descent and the daughter of a refugee family, Abawi combines both professional insight and personal resonance in her narrative. Her novel offers a deeply human portrayal of the Syrian conflict, documenting not only the internal dynamics of war-torn Syria but also the dangerous journey of those who flee their country. The novel traverses multiple geographies of suffering; from the bombed-out streets of Raqqa to the shores of Greece and the camps and the borderlines of Europe, revealing how sovereign violence follows refugees wherever they go. This makes the novel an ideal text through which to explore the interplay between biopolitics, necropolitics, the state of exception and the refugee condition in general sense.

In order to analyze the complex and often dehumanizing experiences of displaced individuals depicted in Atia Abawi's *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes*, this thesis adopts a multidisciplinary theoretical framework structured on Giorgio Agamben's concept of the *state of exception*, Achille Mbembe's theory of *necropolitics*, and Michel Foucault's notion of *biopolitics*. These critical lenses serve as foundational tools for understanding how sovereign power mechanisms manage, exclude, and expose refugee lives to precarity, abandonment, and death.

By drawing on Agamben's *state of exception*, the thesis aims to explore how the suspension of law which was initially introduced as a temporary measure, has become a normalized condition under which refugees are forced to live. The novel's portrayal of borders, refugee camps, and transit zones will be examined as spaces where individuals are simultaneously included in and excluded from the legal and political order. Through this framework, the study investigates how refugees are stripped of political agency and reduced to *bare life* permanently, referring to Agamben's figure of *homo sacer*. The usage of Mbembe's *necropolitics* further allows this study to interrogate the mechanisms through which sovereign actors exercise the power to decide who may live and who must die. The novel's emphasis on the life-threatening conditions refugees go through—from war zones to maritime passages and overcrowded camps with poor conditions—will be analyzed as manifestations of necropolitical governance, where structural indifference, violence in varying forms and abandonment shape the refugee life and condition.

Finally, Foucault's *biopolitics* will be employed to contextualize how modern states regulate and manage life, delineating whose lives are to be protected and whose are to be ignored and disposed. This study accordingly argues that biopolitical governance aims to optimize and protect the lives of citizens whereas it simultaneously designates non-citizens, such as refugees and migrants, as expendable. In this context, my aim is to explore how Abawi's narrative captures and portrays this duality, revealing how refugee bodies are subject to continuous surveillance, control, and exploitation while remaining outside the protections of political community and legal order. Altogether, these theoretical perspectives will assist in revealing how *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* reflects and critiques global responses to displacement, and how literature can serve as a powerful tool for interrogating the politics of life, death, and exclusion in the contemporary refugee crisis.

The structure of the thesis reflects this conceptual and thematic progression and flow. Chapter I elaborates on the theoretical foundations of the study, examining the key concepts of biopolitics, necropolitics, and the state of exception in detail. Chapter II provides an overview of the global refugee crisis, emphasizing its historical roots, political dynamics, and contemporary manifestations from varying aspects. Chapter III integrates the theoretical frameworks with the empirical realities of the refugee crisis, analyzing how the displaced are subjected to biopolitical control and necropolitical abandonment via the state of exception.

The final chapter of this dissertation undertakes a close textual and theoretical reading of Atia Abawi's *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes*, focusing on how the novel illustrates the transformation of refugees from political subjects to bare life within a global system structured by sovereign abandonment, necropolitics, and biopolitical exclusions. Organized into two distinct but interconnected sections, the chapter explores how both internal and external mechanisms of power collaborate to produce the refugee not only as a displaced and expendable figure, but as one systematically deprived of legal, political, and ethical recognition. The first part of the chapter examines the internal dynamics of Syria as a failed and dissolved state, where multiple sovereigns emerge. This fragmentation of power results in a complex field of vying sovereignties, each exercising necropolitical control over the population within specific domains. The overlapping violence, extremist governance, and

international intervention have produced a condition akin to what Achille Mbembe terms a *state of siege*; which is a space where civilians are subjected to arbitrary killings, rapes, surveillance, confinement, and the collapse of legal norms. Here, sovereign power functions not to preserve and fortify life, but to normalize and justify death, operating through a regime that renders individuals killable without legal consequence. The law is suspended, and the people, stripped of fundamental rights and visibility, are reduced to *homo sacer* as excluded figures, lingering within a liminal zone between life and death.

The second part of the chapter traces how this condition of exception is not escaped upon fleeing but follows refugees into host and transit countries. Following all the theoretical guidance referred in this study, this chapter shows how nation-states manage their own populations through mechanisms of security and enhancement, while simultaneously denying these privileges and rights to those they classify as alien, risky or threatening. On the other hand, refugees, though physically present within the borders of these states, are often excluded from the political community and subjected to exploitative or neglectful forms of governance. Camps, deportation and border regimes, and legal limbo reproduce their *bare life* status, while structural conditions such as poverty, lack of medical care, and exposure to violence persist. Particularly in Western states, which pride themselves on supporting human rights, this exclusion reveals an undeniable contradiction. While promoting discourses of protection and moral responsibility, these nations often enact policies that render refugees rightless, voiceless, and disposable and unprotected. This dissonance between declared humanitarian ideals and actual political practices reveals the fragility and selectivity of modern rights regimes. By analyzing these two axes; the sovereign abandonment within Syria and the biopolitical exclusion and necropolitical mode of power across borders, the final chapter aims to reveal that refugee suffering is not incidental or exceptional but structurally embedded within the global order through security discourses.

In sum, this study aims to contribute to the growing body of interdisciplinary scholarship that interrogates the relation between power, sovereign, citizen, and displacement. Through a close engagement with both theoretical framework and literary narrative, it seeks to illuminate the conditions under which certain lives are

rendered killable, certain voices are silenced, and certain people are denied the right to have rights. This study also aims to display that it is only by grappling with these uncomfortable truths that we can begin to envision a more just and inclusive world.



CHAPTER ONE

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Michel Foucault's concept of biopolitics, a cornerstone of his later works, has largely influenced contemporary sociology, international politics, and international relations. Introduced in his seminal works such as *The History of Sexuality* (Foucault, 1978) and *Society Must Be Defended* (Foucault, 2003), biopolitics examines the ways in which states exercise power over life, focusing on the regulation of populations through various institutions, policies, and practices. Foucault's biopolitics transcends the traditional notion of sovereign power, which is characterized by the right to take life or let live, referring to a more pervasive form of power that aims to “make live and let die” (Foucault, 2003: 241). This shift from sovereign power to biopower underscores the state's very role in managing and regulating the health, reproduction, and life processes of its population, highlighting the interplay between political power and biological life.

In sociology, Foucault's biopolitics has provided a framework for comprehending how modern states employ techniques of governance to control and optimize the qualifications of populations. This involves not only the management of bodies via medical and public health interventions but also the regulation of behaviors through norms and disciplinary practices. Nikolas Rose has extensively explored these themes, particularly in his work *The Politics of Life Itself*, where he scrutinizes how biopolitics shapes contemporary practices regarding health and medicine (Rose, 2007: 18-19). Sociologists, on the other hand, have used Foucault's insights to analyze variety of issues, ranging from the rise of the welfare state to the implementation of public health policies and the management of risk in contemporary societies. His work has prompted a reevaluation of the relationship between power and knowledge, emphasizing how scientific discourses and institutional practices contribute to the construction of social realities (Dean, 1999: 99-101). In the realm of international politics, biopolitics has become a crucial lens through which scholars examine the governance of global populations. This includes the regulation of migration, the management of pandemics, and the implementation of international health policies. Foucault's ideas help to illuminate the ways in which global health initiatives and international organizations exercise biopower, often

under the guise of humanitarianism and development. Didier Fassin's work on humanitarian reason highlights how biopolitical practices are central to global health governance (Fassin, 33: 2012). The concept of biopolitics also sheds light on the biopolitical dimensions of security policies, where states and international bodies increasingly focus on biological threats such as epidemics and bioterrorism (Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero, 263: 2008). International relations (IR) theory has also been significantly influenced by Foucault's biopolitics. Biopolitics provides a critical framework for analyzing how power operates at the international level and how it shapes global governance and the management of life and death. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Empire* displays how biopolitical control extends beyond nation-states to the global level, affecting international relations and global order (Hardt and Negri, 23: 2000). This perspective has been instrumental in the study of global surveillance practices, refugee and migration policies, and the politics of humanitarian intervention. By focusing on the relations of power, knowledge, and life, biopolitics in IR challenges traditional state-centric approaches highlighting the complex dynamics of global power relations. Foucault's biopolitics remains a vital theoretical medium to understand the complexities of power in contemporary society. It underscores the ways in which modern governance reaches beyond coercion and violence by coming to include the regulation and optimization of life itself. As issues such as global health crises, migration, and security continue to dominate international agendas, Foucault's insights into biopolitics provide valuable ground to examine the intricate relationships between states, populations, and power particularly in the twenty-first century.

1.1. FOUCAULDIAN MODALITIES OF POWER

1.1.1 DISCIPLINARY POWER

The termination of public execution and torture marks a significant transformation in the meaning of the body within the penal system and the exercise of power. Michel Foucault, in his seminal work *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1977), explores this shift from corporal punishment to more subtle forms of social control, highlighting how the focus moved from the body to the soul. In

early modern Europe, public executions and tortures were common spectacles, intended not only to punish the condemned but also to serve as an influential warning to the public. These brutal methods underscored the sovereign's power to inflict pain and death on the body, reinforcing the authority of the state through sheer terror and the visible destruction of the flesh. Foucault describes how such punishments were rituals of power, demonstrating the sovereign's absolute control over life and death. He states, "The public execution, then, is a ceremonial by which a momentarily injured sovereignty is reconfirmed" (Foucault, 48: 1995). The abolition of public execution and torture marks a significant change in the penal system. Foucault argues that the focus of punishment shifted from the body to the soul, emphasizing correction and reform over physical suffering. This transition reflects broader changes in the exercise of power, where discipline and surveillance become key mechanisms of social control. Instead of inflicting pain on the body, the penal system began to employ techniques that aimed to regulate behavior and monitor individuals. Foucault explains this shift through the concept of the "disciplinary society," where power is exercised through institutions such as schools, hospitals, and prisons. These institutions use surveillance, normalization, and examination to control and shape individuals' behavior. Foucault writes, "A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (Foucault, 136: 1995). The emphasis on making bodies "docile" reflects the new forms of power that operate not through direct violence but through constant observation and regulation.

The transition away from public execution and torture also signifies a redefinition of the body within the penal system. Under the old regime, the body was the primary site of punishment, subjected to pain and suffering as a means of enforcing authority. With the advent of the disciplinary society, the body becomes an object of regulation and control. The aim is not to destroy the body but to shape it, making it more productive and compliant. This change is crucial for understanding modern penal practices. Prisons, for instance, are designed to isolate and monitor inmates continuously, employing a range of disciplinary techniques to reform their behavior. The architecture of the prison itself, with its panoptic design, symbolizes this new mode of power. The Panopticon, a theoretical prison designed by Jeremy Bentham and discussed by Foucault, allows a single guard to observe all prisoners

without them knowing whether they are being watched. This constant possibility of surveillance induces a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power (Foucault, 201: 1995). The shift from corporal punishment to disciplinary methods reflects a broader change in the exercise of power. Foucault argues that modern power operates through subtle, often invisible mechanisms that regulate everyday life. This form of power is more effective because it is internalized by individuals, who come to regulate their own behavior according to societal norms. Foucault states, "The judges of normality are present everywhere. We are in the society of the teacher-judge, the doctor-judge, the educator-judge, the 'social worker'-judge" (Foucault, 304: 1995). Power is thus dispersed throughout society, embedded in various institutions and practices that shape individuals' conduct. The termination of public execution and torture marks a pivotal transformation in the penal system, highlighting a shift from the sovereign's direct control over the body to more nuanced forms of social regulation and discipline. Foucault's analysis in *Discipline and Punish* reveals how the body, once the primary site of punishment, becomes a target of regulation and normalization. This shift underscores a broader change in the exercise of power, where surveillance and disciplinary practices become central to maintaining social order. Through these insights, Foucault provides a critical framework for understanding the evolution of modern penal systems and the complex ways in which power operates in contemporary society.

The perspective over the human body underwent significant transformations with the development of the mercantile economy, a period marked by the rise of capitalism and the increasing importance of controlling and utilizing labor for economic purposes. Michel Foucault's works, particularly *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* and *Security, Territory, Population*, provide insightful analyses of how these changes influenced the control and management of populations, especially those deemed as vagabonds or the idle poor. In the mercantile economy, the human body became a critical asset in the production process. The shift from feudal economies to capitalist ones required a more disciplined and reliable labor force. This period saw the emergence of practices aimed at maximizing the productivity of the human body and ensuring a steady supply of labor. Foucault

explores how disciplinary measures and institutions were developed to transform bodies into economically productive units.

Vagabonds, or those who lived outside the established social and economic structures, were particularly targeted for control. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault discusses how vagabonds were perceived as both economically unproductive and socially dangerous. The idle poor were often viewed with suspicion and were subjected to harsh measures to force them into productive labor. Foucault notes, “The idle were sent to the workhouses, where the rules of discipline were applied in an attempt to transform them into productive workers” (Foucault, 124: 1995). The development of mercantile economies necessitated the regulation of vagabonds, who were seen as a threat to the economic order. Their perceived qualities as dangerous and chaos-generating justified the implementation of stringent disciplinary practices. In *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault elaborates on the strategies employed by states to manage these populations, highlighting how vagabonds were subjected to various forms of surveillance and control to integrate them into the labor market (Foucault, 52: 2007). Workhouses and prisons played a crucial role in the economic usage of human bodies. These institutions were designed not only to punish but also to reform and utilize the labor of those confined within them. Foucault describes how workhouses imposed strict regimens of discipline to inculcate habits of regular work and obedience. The goal was to transform idle bodies into productive laborers who could contribute to the mercantile economy. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault explains how the penal system evolved to serve economic purposes. He writes, “The prison was not intended merely to lock up offenders, but to reform them, to transform their idle bodies into useful ones, capable of contributing to the economic system” (Foucault, 218: 1995). The disciplinary mechanisms of the prison system were thus integral to the broader economic strategies of the mercantile period. The characterization of vagabonds as dangerous and chaos-generating was central to their control. In *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault discusses how vagabonds were often criminalized and subjected to public punishments as a deterrent to others. This criminalization served to justify the harsh treatment and rigorous control measures imposed on them (Foucault, 63: 2007). The perceived threat posed by vagabonds was not only economic but also social. They were seen as a destabilizing force that could

incite disorder and challenge the established social order. This perception further legitimized the use of punitive and corrective measures to reintegrate them into a disciplined workforce. Foucault highlights how these measures were part of a broader strategy to maintain social stability and economic productivity. The development of the mercantile economy brought about significant changes in the economic usage of the human body. Vagabonds, viewed as both economically unproductive and socially dangerous, were subjected to stringent control measures to transform them into productive laborers. Foucault's analyses in *Discipline and Punish* and *Security, Territory, Population* reveal how disciplinary institutions like workhouses and prisons played a crucial role in this process, reflecting the broader strategies of states to manage populations and ensure economic stability. The control and utilization of vagabonds illustrate the intricate connections between economic systems, social order, and the regulation of human bodies.

Central to Foucault's analysis are the concepts of disciplinary power, the structures of the penal system, and the Panopticon, all of which contribute to the creation of self-controlling individuals through norms and institutions. Disciplinary power, as described by Foucault, is a form of power that operates through the meticulous regulation of individuals' behavior, actions, and bodies. Unlike sovereign power, which is characterized by the right to take life or let live, disciplinary power is focused on managing and optimizing life. It is exercised through continuous surveillance, normalization, and examination. Foucault identifies several key elements of disciplinary power: surveillance, normalization, and examination. Central to disciplinary power is the concept of surveillance. Foucault argues that power is most effective when it is visible but unverifiable. The idea is encapsulated in the design of the Panopticon, a theoretical prison proposed by Jeremy Bentham, where a single guard can observe all inmates without them knowing whether they are being watched. This induces a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power (Foucault, 201: 1995). Disciplinary power involves the establishment of norms against which individuals are measured. Those who deviate from these norms are subject to correction. The aim is to create a population that conforms to certain standards of behavior and conduct. This examination combines surveillance and normalization. It is a technique that enables

the continuous assessment and classification of individuals. Through examinations, individuals are subjected to a field of documentation and visibility, which allows for detailed control and manipulation. Foucault describes this process as a means of producing "a documentary system that captures and fixes" individuals within a network of power (Foucault, 189: 1995).

The modern penal system, according to Foucault, is a key institution through which disciplinary power is exercised. The penal system has evolved from a focus on physical punishment and public executions to a system aimed at the reform and normalization of offenders. This shift reflects broader changes in the exercise of power, emphasizing correction and rehabilitation over retribution. Prisons are designed to isolate and observe inmates continuously, using architectural features that facilitate surveillance. The Panopticon serves as an ideal model for this, where the design ensures that prisoners are always visible to the guards, but the guards remain unseen. This induces a self-regulating behavior among inmates. These institutions aim to instill discipline and work ethics among inmates. They combine confinement with labor, emphasizing the transformation of idle bodies into productive ones. The goal is to correct deviant behavior through structured routines and rigorous discipline. Foucault extends the analysis of disciplinary power beyond prisons to other institutions like schools and factories, which also function as mechanisms of control. These institutions impose strict schedules, hierarchical surveillance, and continuous assessment, all aimed at producing disciplined, productive individuals.

The Panopticon, designed by Jeremy Bentham and discussed extensively by Foucault, is a powerful symbol of modern disciplinary societies. The Panopticon is an architectural model that allows a single guard to observe all prisoners without being seen. This design ensures that prisoners must behave as if they are always being watched, leading to self-discipline and self-regulation. Foucault uses the Panopticon as a metaphor for how disciplinary power operates in society. He argues that the principle of surveillance and the possibility of being watched at any moment extends beyond prisons to schools, hospitals, and workplaces. This pervasive surveillance creates "docile bodies" that conform to societal norms and expectations (Foucault, 136: 1977). Such a structure enables creating self-controlling individuals.

The ultimate aim of disciplinary power is to create self-controlling individuals who internalize societal norms and regulate their own behavior. This is achieved through a combination of surveillance, normalization, and examination, which together instill discipline and conformity. Foucault explains that disciplinary power produces individuals who are not only controlled by external forces but also govern themselves through internalized norms and expectations. Thomas Lemke, in his book *Foucault, Governmentality, and Critique*, further elaborates on this concept. Lemke argues that modern forms of governance rest on the self-regulation of individuals, achieved through the internationalization of norms and standards that individuals come to accept and follow voluntarily (Lemke, 36: 2011). This form of power is more subtle and pervasive than traditional forms of coercion, as it operates through the internalization of norms rather than direct force. Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power and the penal system reveals how modern societies exercise control over individuals through surveillance, normalization, and examination. The structures of the penal system, including prisons and other disciplinary institutions, play a crucial role in this process. The Panopticon serves as a powerful metaphor for the operation of disciplinary power, highlighting the importance of continuous surveillance in creating self-regulating individuals. Through these mechanisms, modern societies produce individuals who conform to norms and regulate their own behavior, reflecting the pervasive and subtle nature of disciplinary power.

1.1.2. SECURITY MECHANISMS AND BIO-POLITICS

In the modern power system, the concept of security has evolved significantly, gaining new dimensions and implications. Security now extends beyond traditional concerns of territorial defense and law enforcement to encompass a broad range of social, economic, and biological aspects of life. This expansion of security is intricately linked with the development of biopower, a term coined by Michel Foucault to describe the ways in which states regulate populations and manage life processes. By comparing the development of security mechanisms with juridico-legal and disciplinary power systems, we can better understand the multifaceted nature of modern governance. In traditional juridico-legal systems, power is

exercised primarily through laws and regulations that define permissible and impermissible actions. This system operates on a binary logic of legality and illegality, with the state imposing sanctions to enforce compliance. However, Foucault argues that modern power has shifted towards more diffuse forms of control that extend beyond the legal framework. In *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault discusses how the concept of security has developed to include a range of techniques and strategies aimed at managing populations and mitigating risks (Foucault, 11: 2007). Security mechanisms now involve the regulation of various aspects of social life, from public health to economic stability, and from urban planning to environmental protection. These mechanisms are preventive rather than punitive, focusing on the management of potential threats before they materialize. Biopower is a form of power that focuses on the regulation of populations through the management of life and biological processes. It encompasses a range of interventions aimed at promoting health, managing reproduction, and optimizing human life. Foucault describes biopower as operating through two poles: the disciplining of individual bodies and the regulation of populations (Foucault, 139: 1978). Security mechanisms are closely related to biopower because they both aim to enhance the welfare of populations and manage risks. For instance, public health initiatives such as vaccination programs and sanitation campaigns are biopolitical strategies that aim to prevent disease and promote collective health. Similarly, economic policies designed to stabilize markets and ensure employment are security measures that manage the well-being of populations. Thomas Lemke, in *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction*, highlights how biopower involves "the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life" (Lemke, 36: 2011). This approach aligns with modern security mechanisms that seek to preemptively address threats to social order and public health, thereby reducing the need for repressive legal measures.

The juridico-legal system, as mentioned, relies on the imposition of laws and the use of sanctions to maintain order. This system is reactive, addressing violations of the law after they occur. Disciplinary power, on the other hand, focuses on the continuous surveillance and regulation of individuals to inculcate norms and behaviors that align with societal expectations. It operates within institutions like schools, prisons, and factories, using techniques of surveillance, normalization, and

examination to produce disciplined individuals (Foucault, 136: 1995). Security mechanisms, by contrast, are more holistic and anticipatory. They aim to identify and mitigate risks before they become critical issues. While juridico-legal power addresses specific infractions and disciplinary power targets individual behavior, security mechanisms focus on the broader population level. They employ statistical analysis, risk assessment, and forecasting to manage potential threats and ensure the stability and health of society. Foucault's concept of "governmentality" encapsulates this shift towards a security-oriented mode of governance. Governmentality refers to the art of governing beyond the state, involving a wide array of actors and techniques aimed at optimizing the conditions of life for populations (Foucault, 108: 2007). This approach integrates elements of both disciplinary power and biopower, emphasizing the proactive management of risks and the enhancement of life.

Each of these systems focuses on different areas for the exercise of power, reflecting the evolution of governance and control mechanisms throughout history. Sovereign power, the dominant form of power in pre-modern societies, is characterized by its focus on the authority of the sovereign over the territory and its subjects. This form of power is exercised primarily through the right to decide life and death, often manifesting in public executions and corporal punishment. The sovereign's power is visible and spectacular, aiming to reaffirm the ruler's authority by punishing transgressions against the state. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault describes how sovereign power operates by making an example of the culprit. Public executions and torture were not only punishments but also displays of the sovereign's ability to exert control over life and death. The focus was on the body of the offender, which was subjected to pain and humiliation as a means of reinforcing the sovereign's dominance over the territory and its inhabitants (Foucault, 48: 1995). As societies transitioned into the modern era, disciplinary power emerged as a new form of control, focusing on the human body as a machine that needs to be trained, corrected, and optimized. This shift corresponds with the rise of industrialization and the need for a more efficient and productive workforce. Disciplinary power is exercised through institutions such as schools, factories, prisons, and the military. These institutions employ various techniques to regulate and normalize behavior, including surveillance, normalization, and examination. The goal is to produce

“docile bodies” that are obedient, productive, and efficient. Foucault explains that disciplinary power is concerned with the detailed regulation of bodies, ensuring they are useful and controlled within specific spaces (Foucault, 136: 1995). Biopower represents a further evolution in the exercise of power, focusing on the regulation of populations through the management of biological processes. That mode of power addresses the health, reproduction, and life expectancy of the population as a whole, marking a shift from individual bodies to the collective body of the population. In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault introduces the concept of biopower, describing it as a form of power that deals with "the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life" (Foucault, 140: 1978). Biopower involves a range of interventions aimed at optimizing life processes, including public health concerns, sanitation measures, and population control policies. These interventions are designed to enhance the overall well-being and productivity of the population, reflecting a new emphasis on life and health as central concerns of governance.

Security, as a concept, has gained new meaning in the modern power system, reflecting a shift from reactive and punitive measures to proactive and preventive strategies. The development of security mechanisms is closely tied to biopower, focusing on the regulation and optimization of populations. By comparing security with juridico-legal and disciplinary power systems, we can see how modern governance has evolved to encompass a broader and more integrated approach to managing social, economic, and biological risks. This shift underscores the complexity of contemporary power structures and the importance of understanding security in its multifaceted dimensions. The notion of population as a focus of power marks a significant departure from earlier perspectives. Under sovereign power, the emphasis was on controlling subjects and maintaining authority over a defined territory. Disciplinary power shifted the focus to the regulation of individual bodies within specific institutions. Biopower, however, treats the population as a biological and economic resource that must be managed and optimized. Thomas Lemke, in his book *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction*, elaborates on how biopower transforms the understanding of population. He points out that population is viewed not just as a collection of individuals, but as a living entity with its own dynamics and characteristics that require regulation and intervention (Lemke, 36: 2011). This

perspective necessitates new forms of knowledge and techniques with varying instruments, such as statistics, epidemiology, and public health, to monitor and manage the life processes of the population. The shift to biopower involves a more complex and reveals a new mode of exercise of power, transcending beyond traditional state mechanisms. This mode of power operates through the promotion of norms and standards that individuals internalize, leading to self-regulation and compliance with societal expectations. Biopower thus integrates elements of both disciplinary power and broader governance strategies, emphasizing the optimization of life and health at the population level. The evolution of power systems from sovereign power to disciplinary power and finally to biopower reflects changing strategies for managing and controlling society. Sovereign power focused on the punishment of culprits and the assertion of authority over territory. Disciplinary power aimed at regulating and optimizing individual bodies within institutions. Biopower, however, centers on the management of populations, addressing biological and economic aspects of life.

Michel Foucault's analysis of power systems highlights the critical role of statistics in modern security mechanisms, particularly in the management of crises and the analysis of risk-generating phenomena. Statistics enable the state to monitor, predict, and mitigate potential threats to social order and public health. By collecting and analyzing data, authorities can implement more effective strategies to manage populations and address crises such as epidemics, food shortages, and other public health threats. Foucault's discussions of historical responses to leprosy, plague, famine, and smallpox illustrate how these crises shaped the development of statistical methods and security mechanisms. Statistics are essential for modern security mechanisms because they provide a systematic way to collect, analyze, and interpret data on populations. This quantitative approach allows for the identification of patterns, trends, and potential risks, enabling authorities to implement preventive measures and allocate resources more efficiently. Foucault argues that the emergence of biopower and the focus on managing populations necessitated the development of new tools and techniques, including statistics, to monitor and regulate life processes (Foucault, 139: 1978).

Historical Examples of Crisis Management

In medieval Europe, leprosy was managed primarily through exclusion and isolation. Lepers were segregated from society and confined to leprosariums, reflecting a strategy of spatial separation to protect the healthy population. This approach did not rest upon statistical analysis but on a simple binary division between the healthy and the sick. Foucault reveals that the treatment of leprosy was characterized by "rituals of exclusion" (Foucault, 198: 1995). The management of the plague in the early modern period marked a shift towards more organized and systematic approaches to public health. During plague outbreaks, authorities implemented strict measures such as quarantine, curfews, and the inspection of households. These measures required detailed record-keeping and data collection to track the spread of the disease and enforce regulations. Foucault describes how towns during plague outbreaks were subject to "an elaborate system of surveillance" (Foucault, 195: 1995). The response to the plague involved the early use of statistical methods to understand and control the disease. Officials collected data on infection rates, mortality, and the movement of people. This information was crucial in order to identify hotspots, predict the spread of the disease, and implement necessary interventions. The plague management strategies laid the groundwork for the later development of statistical techniques in public health later. The management of smallpox provides a particularly clear example of how statistical analysis became integral to public health and security mechanisms. The development and implementation of vaccination programs were heavily dependent on statistical data. Authorities collected and analyzed data on infection rates, vaccination coverage, and the effectiveness of different interventions. Foucault discusses how the smallpox vaccination campaign represented a significant advance in the state's ability to manage the health of the population through biopower (Foucault, 145: 1978). The smallpox vaccination campaign required meticulous record-keeping and data analysis to track the spread of the disease and monitor the success of the vaccination efforts. This use of statistics enabled more targeted and effective interventions, ultimately leading to the eradication of smallpox. The campaign illustrated how biopower operates by intervening in biological processes to enhance the health and stability of the population.

Famine management in the modern era further illustrates the importance of statistics for security mechanisms. As governments became more involved in regulating food supplies and managing economic crises, they relied increasingly on statistical data to monitor agricultural production, food prices, and population health. Foucault discusses how the state began to use statistics to "intervene in the natural course of things" and manage scarcity and abundance (Foucault, 2007: 76). Statistics allowed authorities to predict food shortages, assess the needs of different regions, and coordinate relief efforts. By analyzing data on crop yields, weather patterns, and demographic trends, governments could implement policies to prevent famine and mitigate its impact. This proactive approach marked a significant departure from earlier, more reactive methods of crisis management.

In contemporary society, the use of statistics in security mechanisms has become even more sophisticated. Governments and international organizations use statistical models to manage a wide range of risks, from infectious diseases to economic instability and environmental hazards. The ability to collect and analyze large datasets enables authorities to implement evidence-based policies and respond more effectively to crises. Foucault's analysis of biopower highlights how statistics are integral to the management of populations. By quantifying various aspects of life, from birth rates to disease incidence, authorities can identify risk factors, allocate resources, and implement preventive measures. This approach not only enhances the efficiency of crisis management but also reflects a broader shift towards the regulation of life itself. The importance of statistics in security mechanisms is evident in the management of crises such as leprosy, plague, famine, and smallpox. Foucault's work illustrates how these historical examples shaped the development of statistical methods and the modern approach to risk management. Statistics provide the data needed to monitor, predict, and mitigate potential threats, enabling more effective governance and the optimization of public health and safety. This evolution underscores the critical role of quantitative analysis in contemporary security mechanisms and the management of populations.

1.2. NECRO-POLITICS OF ACHILLE MBEMBE

Achille Mbembe's concept of necropolitics offers a profound and critical extension of Michel Foucault's notion of biopolitics. While Foucault's biopolitics focuses on the ways in which states exercise power to "make live and let die," Mbembe's necropolitics shifts the emphasis to the sovereign power's capacity to "make kill and let live." This theoretical framework is particularly relevant in understanding the contemporary manifestations of racist and destructive politics and attitudes. Foucault's biopolitics explores how modern states regulate populations through various mechanisms that optimize life processes. Biopower involves managing public health, reproduction, and life expectancy to ensure the overall well-being and productivity of the population (Foucault, 139: 1978). In contrast, Mbembe's necropolitics examines the ways in which sovereign power exercises control over life and death, particularly in contexts of extreme violence and oppression. Mbembe defines necropolitics as "the subjugation of life to the power of death" (Mbembe, 39: 2003). He argues that in certain political and social contexts, the state and other authorities exert control by deciding who may live and who must die. This form of power is most visible in situations of war, colonialism, slavery, and genocide, where the mechanisms of death are mobilized to maintain control and order.

Mbembe's necropolitics is crucial for understanding today's racist and destructive politics. In many contemporary societies, racial hierarchies and systemic racism underpin the exercise of necropolitical power. This is evident in the disproportionate use of state violence against marginalized racial and ethnic groups, as well as in the policies and practices that lead to their social and economic disenfranchisement. One of the most glaring examples of necropolitics in action is the treatment of Black communities and other marginalized groups by law enforcement agencies. The widespread use of excessive force, racial profiling, and extrajudicial killings reflect a necropolitical stance where the lives of these individuals are deemed expendable. The Black Lives Matter movement, for instance, has brought global attention to the necropolitical realities faced by Black people, particularly in the United States, where police brutality and systemic racism result in the premature deaths of many African Americans (Mbembe, 82: 2019). Judith Butler, in *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, discusses how certain

lives are deemed more grievable than others, reinforcing the necropolitical divide (Butler, 32: 2004). This perspective is critical for understanding the differential valuation of lives in necropolitical regimes. In addition to police violence, necropolitics can be observed in the context of immigration policies. Refugees and migrants, especially those from non-Western countries, often face inhumane treatment, detention, and deportation. These policies reflect a necropolitical logic that views certain populations as threats to national security and social order, justifying their exclusion and, in some cases, their death. The refugee crisis in the Mediterranean, where countless migrants have perished while attempting to cross into Europe, underscores the lethal consequences of such policies (Mbembe, 27: 2003). Giorgio Agamben's concept of "bare life" in *Homo Sacer* further illuminates this dynamic, where migrants and refugees are stripped of political rights and reduced to mere existence, often outside the protection of the law (Agamben, 133: 1998a). The Syrian Civil War has been a stark example of necropolitics in action. The Assad regime's use of chemical weapons, bombings, and sieges against civilian populations demonstrates the use of state power to inflict death and suffering on a large scale. The international community's varied responses to Syrian refugees, often marked by reluctance and exclusion, further highlight the necropolitical dynamics at play (Weizman, 135: 2017). The systematic persecution of the Rohingya minority in Myanmar, including mass killings, sexual violence, and forced displacement, reflects a deliberate necropolitical strategy. The Rohingya's statelessness exacerbates their vulnerability, as they are denied protection and basic rights, reinforcing their status as "bare life" (Amnesty International, 57: 2017). The U.S. policy of separating migrant children from their families at the border, along with the conditions in detention centers, underscores the necropolitical approach to immigration. These policies not only dehumanize migrants but also place them in life-threatening situations, highlighting the necropolitical logic of exclusion and control (De Genova, 1184: 2013).

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed the necropolitical dimensions of global health inequities. Access to healthcare, vaccines, and other resources has been starkly unequal, with marginalized communities and poorer nations suffering the most. The unequal distribution of vaccines and medical supplies highlights a

necropolitical calculus that prioritizes the lives of certain populations over others. This disparity reflects the broader inequalities that define global power relations, where the lives of the most vulnerable are often sacrificed to maintain the health and security of more privileged groups (Mbembe, 2020: 43). Paul Farmer, in *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor*, discusses how structural violence and social inequalities lead to differential access to healthcare, resulting in preventable deaths among the poor and marginalized (Farmer, 29: 2004).

Achille Mbembe's concept of necropolitics helps seeing the darker aspects of modern power systems that Foucault's biopolitics does not fully address. Necropolitics shifts the focus from the management of life to the administration of death, illuminating the ways in which contemporary racist and destructive politics operate. From police brutality and immigration policies to global health inequities, necropolitics reveals how sovereign power continues to subjugate certain populations to the power of death. By examining these dynamics, Mbembe's work challenges us to confront the pervasive and often hidden forms of violence that underpin modern governance.

Achille Mbembe's concept of necropolitics offers a powerful lens through which the refugee crisis and the harsh realities faced by displaced individuals can be analyzed. Necropolitics, which centers upon the sovereign power to “make kill and let live,” enables one to comprehend how refugees are subjected to state-sanctioned violence, exclusion, and death. This concept is particularly relevant when examining the precarious conditions and life-threatening situations that refugees endure as they seek safety and a better life. The refugee crisis exemplifies necropolitical dynamics as states exercise power over life and death through policies and practices that often expose refugees to extreme risks and vulnerability. These policies displays a necropolitical logic that assign certain populations as disposable and their lives as less valuable.

One of the most striking examples of necropolitics in the context of the refugee crisis is the tragic situation in the Mediterranean Sea. Thousands of refugees and migrants have perished while attempting to cross from North Africa to Europe, seeking refuge from conflict, persecution, and poverty. The European Union's border policies, which include strict controls and limited legal pathways for asylum, force

many to undertake perilous journeys on overcrowded and unseaworthy vessels. Mbembe's necropolitics helps explain how these deaths are not merely accidental but are a result of deliberate policies that prioritize border security over human life. The refusal to provide safe and legal routes for refugees, combined with aggressive anti-immigration measures, creates a situation where death becomes a predictable outcome. This reflects Mbembe's assertion that necropolitics involves the management of populations through the exposure of certain groups to conditions that lead to their demise (Mbembe, 27: 2003). The case of refugees who have died in the Italian seas and were later granted posthumous citizenship can be shown as a striking example of necropolitical logic and exercise. This act, while symbolically acknowledging their humanity and plight, underscores the paradoxical nature of necropolitics. In life, these individuals were denied entry, protection, and basic human rights. In death, they are granted the dignity of citizenship, a hollow gesture that highlights the failure of states to protect the living. This posthumous recognition serves to absolve states of responsibility while simultaneously reinforcing the necropolitical framework. By acknowledging the humanity of the deceased, states can project an image of compassion without addressing the underlying policies that caused their deaths. This practice aligns with Mbembe's concept of necropolitics, where the state exercises its power to determine who may live and who must die, and even in death, manipulates the narrative to serve its interests (Mbembe, 40: 2003).

Refugee camps and detention centers are physical manifestations of necropolitical spaces where the lives of refugees are controlled, monitored, and often diminished. These spaces, characterized by poor living conditions, lack of adequate medical care, and limited access to legal recourse, reflect a necropolitical approach to managing refugee populations. Giorgio Agamben's concept of "bare life" further illuminates this dynamic, where refugees are stripped of political rights and reduced to mere existence (Agamben, 133: 1998a). In these camps, refugees are subjected to surveillance and control, confined to spaces that isolate them from the broader society. This confinement not only dehumanizes refugees but also exposes them to violence, disease, and psychological trauma. The necropolitical nature of these spaces is evident in the way they are designed to contain and manage life at the margins, where the survival of refugees is precarious and their deaths are rendered

invisible. Achille Mbembe's concept of necropolitics offers a critical framework for understanding the refugee crisis and the severe vulnerabilities faced by displaced individuals. Through policies that expose refugees to life-threatening conditions, states exercise necropolitical power, determining who may live and who must die. The tragic deaths in the Mediterranean, the confinement in refugee camps and detention centers, and the global health inequities faced by refugees all exemplify the necropolitical dynamics at play. By examining these issues through the lens of necropolitics, we can better understand the pervasive and often hidden forms of violence that underpin modern governance and challenge the international community to address these injustices.

1. 3. GIORGIO AGAM BEN'S CONCEPTS OF STATE OF EXCEPTION AND HOMO SACER

Giorgio Agamben's political philosophy, particularly as elaborated in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1998), radically reconfigures traditional understandings of sovereignty, law, and life. Drawing on Carl Schmitt's concept of the sovereign and Michel Foucault's theory of biopolitics, Agamben reveals the modern political order as fundamentally structured around a paradox: the inclusion of life in the political realm only through its exclusion. Central to this theory are two interlinked concepts: the *state of exception* and the *homo sacer*—a figure whose life may be taken with impunity yet not sacrificed. Together, these ideas disclose the fragility of rights, the latent violence of legal orders, and the structural conditions that enable the abandonment of individuals and populations by sovereign power.

Agamben begins his investigation with Carl Schmitt's infamous dictum: "Sovereign is he who decides on the exception" (Agamben, 11: 1998). The exception, in this formulation, is not merely a moment when the law is violated, but when the legal order is suspended in order to preserve itself. Thus, the sovereign becomes not the executor of the law, but the one who holds the power to suspend it. For Agamben, the modern legal system is founded on this paradox. The state of exception, declared in times of emergency, war, or unrest, reveals that law itself depends on the possibility of its own suspension. The sovereign, by declaring the exception, places

himself both outside and inside the legal order. In Agamben's words: "The paradox of sovereignty consists in the fact the sovereign is, at the same time, outside and inside the juridical order" (15: 1998). This foundational exclusion becomes the "hidden matrix" of modern political life, where legal protections can be withdrawn not as a deviation, but as an integral function of sovereignty. Historically, the state of exception has been invoked during wartime or national crises that are moments when normal legal constraints are deemed inadequate. However, Agamben's critical contribution is to show that the exception has become normalized. The temporary suspension of law has, in modern times, become a permanent technique of governance. As he warns: "The state of exception tends increasingly to appear as the dominant paradigm of government in contemporary politics" (2: 1998). Guantánamo Bay, emergency decrees, indefinite detentions, and anti-terror legislations are all instances where the state of exception becomes the rule.

To ground his theory, Agamben turns to the archetype of the *camp*. In contrast to Hannah Arendt's view that camps represent anomalies or aberrations in political history, Agamben sees the camp as the spatial and juridical arrangement that epitomizes the state of exception. The concentration camp, he argues, is not a historical accident of fascism but the logical outcome of sovereign power's capacity to suspend law. "The camp is the space that opens up when the state of exception becomes the rule," Agamben writes (Ibid 96). It is a zone where individuals are stripped of their legal personhood and reduced to what he calls *bare life*—life that can be killed but no longer holds political value. The camp exposes the fragility of citizenship, the contingency of rights, and the biopolitical mechanism by which states include individuals in the political order only by first excluding them. In modern liberal democracies, the camp is no longer a discrete geographic site but becomes a diffuse logic present at borders, in refugee camps, detention centers, and emergency zones. These are the spaces where individuals are governed through the suspension of legal norms, producing a population that is included in the law only through its exclusion.

The figure of the *homo sacer* is Agamben's central conceptual innovation. The term originates in Roman law, referring to a person who may be killed with

impunity but not sacrificed in a religious rite. The *homo sacer* occupies a liminal position between law and violence, humanity and inhumanity, inclusion and exclusion. For Agamben, this ancient figure encapsulates the condition of modern political subjects reduced to *bare life*; life exposed to sovereign violence without recourse to legal protection. The *homo sacer* is stripped of citizenship, denied rights, and rendered legally invisible. Yet he is not outside the law; rather, his exclusion is a form of inclusion. He is “included in the community in the form of being able to be killed” (Ibid, 82). This figure is not confined to the concentration camp. Agamben identifies *homo sacer* in numerous modern contexts: the stateless person, the refugee, the detainee, the undocumented migrant. Each of these figures is deprived of political agency and reduced to biological existence. As Agamben asserts: “In modern biopolitics, sovereign is he who decides on the value or the nonvalue of life as such” (Ibid 83). Thus, sovereign power is not merely about controlling death but managing the threshold of life, deciding whose life counts and whose does not.

Agamben’s work builds on Foucault’s concept of biopolitics, the regulation of life by modern states. While Foucault emphasizes the productive dimensions of biopower—public health, demography, discipline—Agamben highlights its destructive and negative sides. Biopolitics, in his perspective, always carries with it the possibility of reducing individuals to bare life. The *homo sacer* is the emblem of this transformation: the political subject who is depoliticized, rendered into a body without rights. What distinguishes bare life from other conceptions of vulnerability is its position in relation to the law. Bare life is not simply life in a precarious state but life that exists in a zone of indistinction between law and violence, inside and outside. It is produced by the very mechanisms meant to protect it. In contemporary politics, the category of the refugee becomes the paradigmatic example. As Agamben states, “Refugees represent such a disquieting element in the order of the nation-state because by breaking the link between man and citizen, nativity and nationality, they put the originary fiction of sovereignty in crisis” (Ibid 77). The refugee is the *homo sacer* of our time: not simply a victim of displacement, but the visible sign of the fragility of the political order.

The violence to which the *homo sacer* is subjected is not lawless violence but law's own operation. As Agamben explains, "What the camp reveals is a hidden structure of the political: the decision on the value or nonvalue of life is at the very center of sovereign power" (Ibid 83). This decision is made not through explicit violence but through the juridical operation of exception. The power to suspend rights becomes the power to strip life of meaning. Individuals who fall into this zone lose not only legal protection but the very recognition of their humanity. They become what Judith Butler would later call "ungrievable lives"; lives that are not mourned because they are not considered lives in the first place. This apparatus extends across legal, medical, and military domains. From immigration law to drone warfare, sovereign power operates through a logic of exception that produces zones of abandonment. The law no longer protects but exposes. The camp is no longer a bounded site but a mobile mechanism of control.

Giorgio Agamben's theory of the state of exception and the *homo sacer* unravels the intimate link between law, violence, and life in modern politics. By showing how sovereign power functions not merely by enforcing laws but by deciding when to suspend them, Agamben reveals the precarious foundations of political life. The *homo sacer* is not a historical relic but the hidden foundation of sovereignty who is the figure through which the state maintains its power by excluding what it claims to protect. In an age of mass displacement, refugee crises, and expanding security regimes, Agamben's insights remain chillingly prescient. As the exception becomes the norm and the camp becomes the model of governance, we are compelled to ask: who counts as human? Who has the right to have rights? And what does it mean to live a life that is not merely bare, but fully political?

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUD OF REFUGEE CRISIS

2.1. THE 1951 CONVENTION AND THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES REGARDING THE REFUGEE PROTECTION

The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, commonly known as the Refugee Convention, is the cornerstone of international refugee protection and is critical in shaping the rights of refugees and the legal framework of these rights. The Convention was first formulated in 1954 aftermath the WWII. It had covered geographically only the Europe and included merely the people affected by the incidents occurring before 1951. Later, the geographical and temporal restrictions was removed by the 1967 Protocol, broadening the scope to include individuals who fled due to events occurring after January 1, 1951. The Convention offers the most comprehensive content regarding the international instruments and refugee rights when compared with the previous formulations. According to the Convention, a refugee is defined as someone who: “has a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of their nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country” (The 1951Convention, 14: 1951). The definition indeed emphasizes on the protection of the individual from any kind of persecution and any kind of treatment that may cause the refugee to suffer from persecution. In that sense, the basis of the Convention is established on several principles regarding the protection of refugees and their rights. The non-discrimination, *non-refoulement* and non-penalization are the most distinctive and fundamental principles. The Convention advocates the protection of individuals indiscriminately, putting aside the differences about race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion or nationality. According to the Article 31 of the Convention, asylum seekers cannot be prohibited from the seeking of asylum or should not be penalized on the grounds of their unauthorized entry into the territory of contracting states, of their presence there, or of breaching the law pertaining to the regulations of immigration. As for the non-refoulement principle, Article 32 and 33 aim to prevent

the expulsion or the return of an asylum seeker from the contracting states to a territory where their rights of life and freedom are at risk. Herein, the principles of non-penalization and non-refoulement do not apply to the individuals who are seen exceptional when they are believed to pose a threat to the public order of the host country in question, having a criminal background or an affiliation with a terrorist group.

Signing the Convention, the contracting states consent to act in favor of the refugees and to cooperate with international organizations for this purpose. The 1951 Convention provides a fundamental definition of who is considered a refugee, focusing on persecution based on specific grounds. This definition has been the basis for international refugee protection for decades. However, as global contexts shift, there is a need to continually reassess and potentially expand the criteria to address new forms of displacement. In recent years, the concept of “refugee” has evolved to address new forms of displacement. Environmental degradation, climate change, and socio-economic instability are increasingly recognized as factors that can contribute to forced migration. While these issues are not explicitly covered by the 1951 Convention, there is a growing body of scholarly work advocating for broader interpretations. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the legal obligations of states under the 1951 Convention inevitably cause challenges in implementing these standards effectively. It is also significant to highlight the importance of maintaining the humanitarian essence of refugee protection while addressing the practical and political challenges. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) plays a pivotal role in overseeing the application of these instruments and ensuring that refugees are provided with appropriate protection and assistance. On the other hand, the improvements in the international human rights law consolidate the application of the articles and principles referred in the Convention.

2.2. SMUGGLING

Smuggling has emerged as a significant issue in the context of global refugee movements, posing severe challenges for both refugees and host countries in the West. Smuggling networks exploit the desperation of individuals fleeing persecution,

conflict, and economic instability, facilitating their illegal entry into safer territories. According to Alexander Betts and Paul Collier, smuggling operations often result in perilous journeys that expose refugees to “exploitation, violence, and death” (Betts and Collier, 93: 2017). These dangerous crossings not only jeopardize the lives of refugees but also strain the resources and security frameworks of host countries. As James Hathaway highlights, the influx of smuggled refugees can lead to “significant legal and policy dilemmas” for Western nations, which must balance humanitarian obligations with security concerns (Hathaway, 276: 2005). Furthermore, Guy Goodwin-Gill and Jane McAdam note that smuggling undermines “the integrity of legal migration systems,” complicating efforts to manage refugee flows effectively (Goodwin-Gill and McAdam, 89: 2007). This intricate interplay between refugee smuggling and its impacts necessitates a comprehensive understanding and coordinated international response to mitigate risks and uphold the protection rights of refugees.

The migrant smuggling is confused with human kidnapping which can be also evaluated within the framework of refugee flows because the migrants smuggled may be kidnapped after their journey. In this sense, migrant smuggling and human kidnapping are two distinct but interrelated phenomena that significantly impact refugee flows. Both practices exploit the vulnerabilities of individuals seeking safety and better opportunities, often resulting in severe human rights violations and complex legal challenges. Understanding these differences is crucial for developing effective policies to protect refugees and manage international migration. In order to analyze the impacts of these two distinct phenomena, it will be useful to explain them separately. Migrant smuggling is defined under the United Nations Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air (2000), supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. It refers to the facilitation, for financial or material gain, of illegal entry of a person into a state of which the person is not a national or permanent resident (UNODC, 2: 2000). As for the latter, human kidnapping involves the illegal detention or abduction of individuals, often for ransom, forced labor, or exploitation, and is not necessarily linked to the movement across international borders. It violates multiple international human rights laws, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which

protects individuals' rights to liberty and security (UN, 1948: Art. 3). Migrant Smuggling often results in hazardous journeys where refugees face life-threatening risks. Alexander Betts and Paul Collier report that approximately 2,275 refugees died in the Mediterranean Sea in 2018 while attempting to reach Europe, often facilitated by smugglers (Betts and Collier, 112: 2017). Smugglers frequently abandon refugees in dire conditions, leading to dehydration, starvation, and exposure to violence. James Hathaway notes that smuggling networks can lead to "gross exploitation, violence, and death" (Hathaway, 136: 2005). Human Kidnapping exacerbates these dangers, as refugees can be abducted en route and subjected to ransom demands, torture, and forced labor. Guy Goodwin-Gill and Jane McAdam highlight that kidnapping of refugees "often results in prolonged detention, physical abuse, and psychological trauma" (Goodwin-Gill and McAdam, 57: 2007). According to a 2020 report by Amnesty International, an estimated 1,500 refugees in Libya were kidnapped and held for ransom in 2019, facing severe abuse (Amnesty International, 24: 2020).

The impacts on refugees are profound. The trauma from smuggling and kidnapping can lead to long-term psychological issues, including PTSD, anxiety, and depression. Additionally, the financial burden from paying smugglers or ransoms often depletes the resources of refugees and their families, leaving them in a precarious economic situation. Host countries face significant challenges due to these phenomena. The influx of refugees smuggled into their borders complicates legal and security frameworks, making it difficult to manage and process asylum claims effectively. This often leads to overcrowded detention centers and increased public scrutiny. As Hathaway states, "the unregulated influx of refugees poses significant policy dilemmas for host countries, balancing humanitarian obligations with national security" (Hathaway, 278: 2005). According to UNHCR, over 10,000 refugees have died or gone missing in the Mediterranean since 2014, with many deaths attributed to smuggling operations (UNHCR, 2020). A New York Times article reports that in 2017, more than 3,100 refugees died crossing the Mediterranean, highlighting the deadly risks of these smuggling routes (Kingsley, 2018). Understanding the differences between migrant smuggling and human kidnapping, and their impacts on refugees and host countries, is crucial for developing comprehensive strategies to

protect vulnerable populations. International refugee law provides a framework for addressing these issues, but effective implementation requires coordinated international efforts and robust legal mechanisms to combat these human rights violations.

2.3. INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW AND INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE LAW

International Human Rights Law plays a crucial role in the management of refugee flows by providing a universal framework of rights that apply to all individuals, including refugees. IHRL ensures that refugees receive fundamental protections regardless of their status or location. This body of law establishes key principles such as non-discrimination, the right to life, and the prohibition of torture, which are essential in safeguarding the dignity and well-being of refugees. As Donnelly notes, "IHRL provides a comprehensive set of norms that help to protect the fundamental rights of refugees, even when they are outside their country of origin" (Donnelly, 104: 2013). However, the application of human rights through domestic laws of host countries can face significant challenges. States may interpret and implement international human rights norms differently, leading to inconsistent protection levels. As Kälin and Künzli point out, "the inconsistency in the domestic implementation of international human rights standards can undermine the protection afforded to refugees" (Kälin and Künzli, 145: 2009). Additionally, the political and economic contexts of host countries can impact their willingness and ability to uphold these standards. For instance, countries facing economic hardship or political instability may struggle to provide adequate protection and support to refugees.

International Refugee Law specifically addresses the protection and assistance of refugees. It includes key legal instruments such as the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, which define who is a refugee, their rights, and the obligations of states. IRL is crucial for managing refugee flows as it provides a legal framework for the protection of refugees and ensures that they are not returned to countries where they face persecution (non-refoulement). According to Goodwin-Gill and McAdam, "the Refugee Convention is the cornerstone of international

protection for refugees, providing a comprehensive legal regime for their rights and state responsibilities" (Goodwin-Gill and McAdam, 28: 2007). Despite its importance, the effective application of IRL also faces challenges. The lack of a cohesive international mechanism to oversee the implementation of refugee rights often leaves individuals vulnerable to rights violations. Anker emphasizes that "the absence of a robust international oversight system means that refugees can suffer from gaps in protection and inconsistent application of their rights" (Anker, 172: 2014). Additionally, domestic political considerations can frequently override international legal obligations, leading to inadequate protection for refugees. Aleinikoff highlights that "domestic political considerations frequently override international legal obligations, leading to gaps in protection for refugees" (Aleinikoff, 213: 2012).

The correlation and cooperation between International Human Rights Law (IHRL) and International Refugee Law (IRL) form a cornerstone of the international legal framework designed to protect the rights of individuals who have been forced to flee their countries. While both bodies of law share the common goal of safeguarding fundamental human rights, they operate within distinct legal regimes. IHRL provides a universal set of rights applicable to all individuals, whereas IRL specifically addresses the protection and assistance of refugees. Prominent scholars have extensively discussed these intersections and the challenges faced in implementing human rights protections through domestic laws of host countries. One significant handicap in the application of human rights through domestic laws is the variability in the interpretation and enforcement of international norms by host countries. As Kälin and Künzli point out, "the inconsistency in the domestic implementation of international human rights standards can undermine the protection afforded to refugees" (Kälin and Künzli, 145: 2009). This issue is compounded by the political, economic, and social contexts of host countries, which can influence their willingness and ability to uphold these standards. Furthermore, Anker emphasizes that "the lack of a cohesive international mechanism to oversee the implementation of refugee rights often leaves these individuals vulnerable to rights violations" (Anker, 172: 2014).

The European Union's handling of the refugee crisis, particularly in the Mediterranean, demonstrates the challenges when IHRL and IRL do not collaborate effectively. Thousands of refugees have faced perilous journeys, and many have died trying to reach European shores. The principle of non-refoulement has often been compromised by policies aimed at deterring migration. However, European states have implemented stringent border controls that undermine refugee protections, leading to a humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean. The U.S. policies under the Trump administration, such as the "Remain in Mexico" (RMX) policy, highlighted significant gaps in collaboration between IHRL and IRL. Human Rights First reported that over 1,500 cases of kidnappings, murders, and other violent attacks occurred against asylum seekers returned to Mexico under RMX. The policy severely restricted access to legal counsel and forced asylum seekers into dangerous situations, with less than 1% receiving relief under the program (Human Rights First, 2023). The Biden administration has continued some of these policies, leading to further human rights violations. Amnesty International USA reports that asylum seekers face arbitrary detention, family separations, and inadequate protection in detention facilities. The treatment of Haitian asylum seekers in Del Rio, Texas, is a notable example of how racial discrimination exacerbates these issues. As for the statistics and impact, the Mediterranean remains the deadliest sea for refugees, with thousands of deaths recorded annually as they attempt to reach Europe (Amnesty International, 2023). The RMX policy resulted in less than 1% of asylum seekers being granted relief, with many facing extreme violence in Mexico (Human Rights First, 2023). As of 2022, waitlists for asylum processing at the U.S.-Mexico border exceeded 25,000, with asylum seekers subjected to violence and exploitation during prolonged waits (Amnesty International USA, 2023).

2.4. THE REFLECTIONS OF REFUGEE CRISIS ON THE MEDIA, ART AND POLITICS

The global refugee crisis has profoundly influenced media and social media, art, and politics, shaping public perception and policy across the world. Media outlets and social media platforms have become pivotal in documenting the harrowing

journeys and humanizing the plight of refugees, often swaying public opinion and political discourse. Art, as a powerful form of expression, has served as a medium for both refugees and artists to narrate the refugee experience, fostering empathy and awareness. Politically, the refugee crisis has sparked intense debate, influencing border policies and asylum practices in asylum-granting countries. These multifaceted impacts resonate deeply with refugees, often determining their access to safety and stability, while also challenging citizens and states to navigate the complex terrain of humanitarian responsibility and national security. The intersection of these domains underscores the critical need for a compassionate and balanced approach to addressing the refugee crisis in contemporary society.

Media plays a crucial role in shaping public perception, and in the context of the refugee crisis, it has significantly contributed to the creation of fear and anxiety among the inhabitants of host countries. The portrayal of refugees in the media often emphasizes negative stereotypes, presenting them as potential sources of chaos, crime, and a threat to the existing social order. This framing not only influences public opinion but also provides governments with a powerful tool to justify restrictive border policies. As noted by Ruth Wodak, political leaders use media narratives to frame refugees as threats to national security and cultural identity, thereby legitimizing exclusionary policies (Wodak, 68-79: 2015). This strategic use of fear is evident in international media coverage, such as *The New York Times* and *The Guardian*, which have documented instances where political rhetoric and media reports have synergistically heightened public fear. For example, an article in *The New York Times* highlighted how European governments cited fears of terrorism and economic instability to enforce tighter border controls (Smith, 2020: A3).

Mainstream media outlets frequently focus on isolated incidents involving refugees, amplifying the perceived threat they pose. Sensationalist headlines and graphic images can evoke strong emotional responses, leading to a generalized fear of refugees among the public. For instance, images of large groups of refugees arriving at borders can create a sense of invasion and loss of control, which is further exacerbated by news stories that highlight any criminal activities involving refugees. Media narratives often depict refugees as potential sources of chaos, crime, and threats to the social order, fueling xenophobic sentiments and public anxiety.

Prominent scholars, such as Leo W. Jeffres in his book "Media Effects and Society," highlight how media can shape public perception through framing and agenda-setting, which in turn influences political discourse and policy decisions (Jeffres, 142: 1997). Governments of host states often capitalize on this fear to implement and justify stringent border controls and asylum policies. By framing refugees as a threat to national security and social stability, political leaders can garner public support for policies that would otherwise be seen as harsh or inhumane. This strategy is evident in the rhetoric used by many politicians, who emphasize the need to protect their country's borders from the supposed dangers posed by refugees. The fear-mongering narrative is a powerful tool in political campaigns, often leading to the implementation of restrictive immigration policies and the militarization of borders.

The impact of these media-driven fears is profound. For refugees, it means facing increasingly hostile environments, both in terms of physical border barriers and societal acceptance. Inhabitants of host countries, influenced by media portrayals, may develop xenophobic attitudes, further isolating and marginalizing refugees. This dynamic not only affects the immediate safety and well-being of refugees but also hampers their integration into society, perpetuating a cycle of fear and exclusion. Social media amplifies these effects by enabling the rapid spread of misinformation and sensationalist content. Studies, such as those by Kate Starbird show how false narratives about refugees can go viral, influencing public opinion and fueling anti-refugee sentiment (Starbird, 60-73: 2019). Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube can quickly disseminate stories that align with the fear-driven narratives promoted by traditional media. The viral nature of social media ensures that even fringe or extreme viewpoints can gain significant traction, further entrenching public fear and anxiety about refugees. The real-time nature of social media amplifies these effects, as users are exposed to a continuous stream of fear-inducing content, often without critical engagement or fact-checking.

The response of European countries to refugees from the Middle East compared to those from Ukraine highlights a striking paradox in the West's stance on human rights and non-discrimination. This discrepancy has drawn widespread criticism for its apparent hypocrisy and selective humanitarianism, where the treatment of refugees is markedly influenced by their country of origin. When the

Syrian civil war and other conflicts in the Middle East spurred massive waves of refugees, many European countries responded with stringent border controls and heightened security measures. Media coverage often framed these refugees as potential threats, fostering fear and anxiety among the inhabitants of host countries. Governments capitalized on this fear, portraying Middle Eastern refugees as sources of chaos and a threat to the social order. Policies such as erecting border fences, enacting restrictive asylum laws, and deploying military forces to patrol borders were justified under the guise of maintaining national security and cultural integrity (Fassin, 215-228: 2011). In stark contrast, the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022 elicited a remarkably different reaction. European nations, previously resistant to large-scale refugee inflows, opened their borders and extended comprehensive support to Ukrainian refugees. This warm reception was accompanied by widespread media portrayals of Ukrainians as deserving victims of aggression, evoking empathy and solidarity rather than fear (Sassen, 112-115: 2014). The public opinion in many European countries was overwhelmingly supportive of assisting Ukrainian refugees, reflecting a sense of shared cultural and geographical proximity.

This differential treatment exposes a paradox within the Western discourse on human rights and non-discrimination. While European countries often champion these values, their actions reveal a selective application based on the refugees' nationality and ethnicity. The favorable treatment of Ukrainian refugees, juxtaposed with the harsh response to Middle Eastern refugees, underscores a troubling inconsistency in upholding the principles of equal treatment and universal human rights (Fassin, 223: 2011; Sassen, 117: 2014). Public opinion has played a crucial role in shaping these divergent responses. Surveys and studies indicate that the European public is more sympathetic to refugees who are perceived to be culturally and racially similar. This bias is often reflected in media narratives and political rhetoric, which can either amplify or mitigate public fears and prejudices. For instance, a report by the European Council on Foreign Relations has noted that while there was significant public support for welcoming Ukrainian refugees, attitudes towards Middle Eastern refugees were often characterized by suspicion and hostility (Krastev, 45-47: 2022). The West's selective humanitarianism has not gone unnoticed. Critics argue that such discriminatory practices undermine the moral

authority of European nations and erode the foundations of international human rights. The inconsistency in the treatment of refugees raises ethical questions about the genuine commitment of European countries to the principles of non-discrimination and equal protection under international law. While professing a commitment to human rights and non-discrimination, the West's actions often betray a bias influenced by the refugees' origins. This selective humanitarianism, driven by public opinion and media portrayals, challenges the integrity of the West's professed values and calls for a more consistent and equitable approach to refugee protection.

The refugee crisis has significantly influenced the realm of art, providing a powerful platform for raising awareness and fostering empathy. Artists around the world have used various mediums to reflect the struggles and resilience of refugees, creating works that transcend cultural and linguistic barriers to highlight the human aspect of the crisis. This artistic engagement not only serves as a poignant commentary on the plight of displaced individuals but also plays a crucial role in informing and mobilizing public opinion. Art has the unique ability to convey complex emotions and stories that might be overlooked or misunderstood in traditional media narratives. Through paintings, sculptures, installations, performances, and digital art, artists have been able to capture the experiences of refugees in ways that resonate deeply with audiences. For instance, Ai Weiwei, a renowned Chinese contemporary artist, has created several projects focusing on the refugee crisis, including his 2017 documentary "Human Flow," which chronicles the global displacement of refugees (Gunning, 14-17: 2018). His works poignantly depict the dire conditions and human rights issues faced by refugees, compelling viewers to confront the humanitarian aspects of the crisis. Moreover, art exhibitions and installations dedicated to the refugee crisis often serve as immersive experiences, enabling viewers to engage with the subject matter on a visceral level. For example, Banksy's "Dismaland" exhibition featured a boat filled with lifelike figures of refugees, starkly highlighting the perilous journeys undertaken by those fleeing conflict. Such works not only evoke empathy but also provoke critical thought about the policies and attitudes that contribute to the crisis (Bailey, 22-25: 2015). Art also serves as a medium for refugees themselves to express their stories and reclaim their narratives. The "Unseen" project by Syrian artist Tammam Azzam, which digitally

superimposed iconic artworks onto images of war-torn Syria, went viral on social media, drawing international attention to the devastation in the region. Through evocative and immersive works, artists bring the human dimension of the crisis to the forefront, challenging audiences to engage with the issue on a deeper level. By amplifying the voices of refugees and highlighting their stories, art not only informs and educates but also inspires collective action towards more compassionate and just responses to the refugee crisis.

2.5. REFUGEE CAMPS, DETENTION CENTERS, SELF-SETTLEMENTS

The refugee crisis has given rise to various living arrangements for displaced individuals, each with its unique challenges and implications. Refugee camps, detention centers, and self-settlements represent the primary forms of accommodation for refugees, reflecting the diverse responses of host countries and the resilience of refugees themselves. Refugee camps, often managed by international organizations, aim to provide basic necessities but frequently struggle with overcrowding and limited resources. Detention centers, used by some nations as a means of controlling and processing asylum seekers, have been criticized for their harsh conditions and potential human rights violations. Meanwhile, self-settlements, where refugees integrate into local communities, showcase both the ingenuity of refugees and the complexities of unregulated living conditions. Understanding these three accommodation types sheds light on the broader issues faced by refugees and the varying degrees of hospitality and hostility they encounter in their search for safety and stability.

Refugee camps play a crucial role in managing the movements and lives of displaced individuals, often reflecting a panopticon-like approach to control and surveillance. Originating from Michel Foucault's concept of the panopticon, a design that allows a single guard to observe all inmates without them knowing whether they are being watched, refugee camps similarly centralize oversight and impose a regulated environment. These camps are typically located in isolated areas, designed to keep refugees contained and apart from the host country's local populace. Giorgio Agamben's work, particularly his concept of the "state of exception," provides a

profound framework for understanding the role of refugee camps. According to Agamben, refugee camps are spaces where normal laws are suspended, creating a situation where refugees live in a state of exception, stripped of rights and subjected to sovereign power without legal protections. He states, “The camp is the space that opens up when the state of exception starts to become the rule” (Agamben, 168: 1998). This spatial organization ensures that the refugees remain under constant observation, curtailing any potential unrest and maintaining order within the camps. The controlled environment also allows for the systematic distribution of aid and resources, which, while essential for survival, also reinforces dependency and restricts autonomy.

In terms of urban planning, refugee camps are strategically placed on the peripheries of urban centers or in remote locations, effectively segregating refugees from the local community. This separation aligns with underlying policies aimed at minimizing the impact of refugees on local infrastructure, economies, and social dynamics. By keeping refugees outside the local life, authorities can mitigate the perceived risks of social integration, such as cultural clashes or competition for jobs and resources. Agamben's assertion that “the refugee is the figure in which the tie between the human being and citizenship is progressively being undone” (Agamben, 114: 1995) highlights how camps reinforce the notion of refugees as outsiders, disconnected from the rights and protections afforded to citizens. The spatial segregation inherent in refugee camps serves multiple functions. It not only controls the refugee population but also insulates the host community from the challenges and complexities of integrating a large influx of displaced people. This isolation can lead to the stigmatization and marginalization of refugees, who are seen as temporary and peripheral rather than potential contributors to the host society. Moreover, the physical and social distance maintained through the camp system underscores the temporary and exceptional status of refugees, reinforcing their identity as outsiders. As Agamben notes, “The camp is thus the new biopolitical nomos of the planet” (Agamben, 176: 1998), illustrating the pervasive and global nature of this form of control. However, this approach to managing refugees has significant drawbacks. The prolonged stay in camps can lead to deteriorating mental and physical health among refugees, who often face inadequate living conditions, limited access to

education and employment, and restricted freedom of movement. Additionally, the isolation and lack of interaction with the host community hinder opportunities for cultural exchange and mutual understanding, perpetuating stereotypes and xenophobia. Scholars such as Michel Agier have critiqued this aspect, stating that camps “are not meant to be permanent settlements, yet they often become spaces of prolonged waiting and uncertainty” (Agier, 9: 2011). Other scholars have similarly highlighted the control mechanisms inherent in refugee camps. Liisa Malkki discusses how camps create environments of exclusion and surveillance that reinforce refugees' liminal status (Malkki, 82-85: 1995). Additionally, Alexander Betts and Paul Collier argue that the camp system often fails to provide a sustainable solution for refugees, instead perpetuating dependency and marginalization (Betts and Collier, 134-137: 2017). While camps provide immediate relief and order, they also pose significant challenges to the long-term integration and well-being of refugees.

Refugee camps, while intended to provide temporary relief and shelter, often subject refugees to harsh and precarious conditions. Delays in aid delivery, immobility, and limited social assistance are common issues that exacerbate the already dire circumstances faced by displaced individuals. Additionally, host countries grapple with numerous challenges, including strained international relations, asymmetrical burden-sharing with other nations, employment issues among their own citizens, and limited national resources. The living conditions in refugee camps are frequently characterized by significant delays in the provision of humanitarian aid. These delays can result from logistical challenges, bureaucratic red tape, or insufficient funding. Consequently, refugees may experience prolonged periods without access to adequate food, clean water, medical care, and sanitation facilities. Such conditions not only jeopardize their health and well-being but also heighten their vulnerability to diseases and malnutrition. As Alexander Betts and Paul Collier note, “Humanitarian assistance often arrives too late or is insufficient, leaving refugees in a state of perpetual crisis” (Betts and Collier, 98: 2017). Immobility is another critical issue in refugee camps. Refugees are often confined within the camp’s boundaries, unable to move freely or seek opportunities outside. This restriction limits their ability to work, pursue education, or integrate into the

host community. The lack of mobility reinforces a sense of stagnation and dependency, as refugees are unable to rebuild their lives or contribute meaningfully to society. Liisa Malkki highlights this issue, stating that the “immobilization of refugees in camps is a form of control that perpetuates their status as non-citizens and outsiders” (Malkki, 103: 1995). Limited social assistance further compounds the hardships faced by refugees. Social services, including education, psychological support, and legal assistance, are often inadequate or unavailable in many camps. This lack of support hinders refugees’ ability to recover from trauma, access justice, and gain skills that could aid their eventual resettlement or repatriation. Michel Agier points out that “the minimal social services provided in camps are insufficient to address the complex needs of refugees, leaving them in a state of prolonged vulnerability” (Agier, 56: 2011).

Host countries also face significant challenges in accommodating refugees. One of the primary issues is the strain on international relations and the inequitable distribution of the refugee burden. Many countries, particularly those bordering conflict zones, bear a disproportionate share of the refugee influx while wealthier nations often provide limited support. This asymmetrical burden-sharing creates tensions between countries and undermines global solidarity. As noted by Betts and Collier, “The failure to equitably distribute the responsibility for refugees leads to a breakdown in international cooperation and exacerbates regional instability” (Betts and Collier, 76: 2017). Employment problems and limited national resources are additional challenges for host countries. The influx of refugees can create competition for jobs, particularly in low-skilled sectors, leading to tensions between refugees and local citizens. This competition can fuel xenophobia and resentment, complicating efforts to integrate refugees into society. Moreover, host countries often struggle with limited resources, and the additional burden of providing for refugees can strain public services, infrastructure, and social welfare systems. Giorgio Agamben highlights the broader implications, stating that “the influx of refugees challenges the very foundations of the nation-state, as it must reconcile its limited resources with the humanitarian imperative to provide sanctuary” (Agamben, 122: 1998). These issues are compounded by the challenges faced by host countries, such as strained international relations, asymmetrical burden-sharing, employment

competition, and limited national resources. Addressing these multifaceted problems requires a concerted effort from the international community to ensure equitable burden-sharing and to provide adequate support and opportunities for refugees to rebuild their lives.

The Moria Refugee Camp on the island of Lesbos has become synonymous with the harsh and precarious conditions faced by refugees. Originally designed to hold 3,000 people, at its peak, it housed more than 20,000, leading to severe overcrowding. According to Human Rights Watch, residents faced inadequate sanitation, insufficient food supplies, and a lack of medical care. The dire living conditions exacerbated mental health issues and made the camp a breeding ground for violence and exploitation. As one report noted, "Moria has become a symbol of Europe's failure to respond adequately to the refugee crisis" (Human Rights Watch, 5: 2020). Kara Tepe, established as an alternative to Moria on Lesbos, also faced numerous issues. Although it was intended to be a more humane alternative, it became overcrowded and conditions deteriorated rapidly. Amnesty International reported that "residents of Kara Tepe showcased inadequate access to healthcare, education, and protection services, exacerbating their vulnerability" (Amnesty International, 14: 2020). The Calais Jungle, an informal settlement near the port of Calais, housed thousands of refugees and migrants hoping to cross into the United Kingdom. The camp was characterized by makeshift shelters, poor hygiene, and limited access to essential services. The French government repeatedly dismantled parts of the camp, leading to further instability and vulnerability for its residents. A report by the Refugee Rights Data Project highlighted that "more than three-quarters of those interviewed in Calais had experienced police violence, and nearly half reported inadequate access to food" (Refugee Rights Data Project, 12: 2016). Camp de la Linière in Grande-Synthe, France, was established as a response to the dire conditions in other camps like Calais. However, it too struggled with significant challenges. In 2017, a fire destroyed much of the camp, leaving residents without shelter. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) reported that "the destruction of the camp led to increased precarity for already vulnerable populations, with many forced to live in informal settlements without access to basic services" (MSF, 7: 2017). Lipa Camp, located near the border with Croatia, has faced significant challenges,

particularly during the winter months. The camp was not equipped to handle severe weather, leading to catastrophic conditions when it was partially destroyed by fire in December 2020. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that "the living conditions in Lipa were inhumane, with refugees left without adequate shelter, food, and heating" (IOM, 3: 2020). The situation highlighted the vulnerabilities faced by refugees in camps that lack sufficient infrastructure and resources. These examples illustrate the precarity and vulnerability faced by refugees in camps across the West. Overcrowding, inadequate access to basic services, and instability are common issues that exacerbate the suffering of refugees. Furthermore, the isolation and immobility imposed by these camps hinder refugees' ability to rebuild their lives and integrate into host communities. These conditions not only violate basic human rights but also highlight the failure of the international community to provide adequate protection and support to displaced individuals.

Detention centers and refugee camps, while both utilized to manage displaced individuals, serve distinct purposes and operate under different principles. Refugee camps are generally established to provide temporary shelter, basic necessities, and protection for refugees fleeing conflict or persecution. In contrast, detention centers are designed to control, restrict, and process the movements of asylum seekers and other migrants, often with the primary aim of enforcing immigration laws and policies. Detention centers are facilities where individuals, particularly asylum seekers and undocumented migrants, are held while their immigration status is being determined. The primary purpose of these centers is to ensure that individuals do not abscond while their applications for asylum or residency are processed, or while they await deportation. Governments often justify the use of detention centers on the grounds of maintaining national security, managing migration flows, and deterring irregular migration.

Refugees in detention centers face heightened vulnerability due to several factors such as arbitrary detention, inadequate living conditions, lack of legal assistance and psychological impact. Many asylum seekers are subject to arbitrary detention, held for indefinite periods without clear justification or legal recourse. This practice contravenes international standards, such as those outlined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which states that

detention should not be arbitrary and should be used as a last resort (United Nations, 1966: Article 9). Detention centers often have poor living conditions, with inadequate access to healthcare, nutritious food, and sanitation. Reports from various human rights organizations have documented overcrowding, lack of proper medical care, and unsanitary conditions in detention centers across the globe (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Detainees frequently face barriers to accessing legal assistance, which is crucial for navigating complex asylum procedures. This lack of support can lead to prolonged detention and increased risk of wrongful deportation. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), access to legal aid is a fundamental component of fair and efficient asylum procedures (UNHCR, 2017). The indefinite nature of detention and the conditions within these centers can have severe psychological impacts on detainees, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Studies have shown that prolonged detention exacerbates mental health issues, particularly among vulnerable groups such as children and survivors of torture (Silove, Steel, and Mollica, 2001).

The processes and procedures within detention centers frequently do not comply with international refugee law and human rights law. Key issues include: Violation of Non-Refoulement Principle, Lack of Due Process, Children in Detention. The principle of non-refoulement, enshrined in the 1951 Refugee Convention, prohibits the return of individuals to countries where they face persecution or serious harm. However, practices such as expedited removal or lack of proper asylum hearings can lead to violations of this principle (UNHCR, 1951, Article 33). Many detention centers operate with limited transparency and oversight, often denying detainees the right to challenge their detention effectively. This lack of due process undermines the rule of law and contravenes international standards for the treatment of detainees (International Detention Coalition, 2015). The detention of children, particularly unaccompanied minors, is a significant area of concern. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) stipulates that children should not be detained except as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period (United Nations, 1989: Article 37). However, many countries continue to detain children, often in conditions detrimental to their physical and mental health. Detention centers, distinct from refugee camps, serve to control and process asylum seekers, often at the

expense of the rights and well-being of detainees. The arbitrary detention, poor living conditions, lack of legal assistance, and psychological impact on refugees highlight the vulnerability of individuals within these centers. Moreover, the processes and procedures often fail to comply with international refugee law and human rights law, leading to significant violations of the rights of asylum seekers. Addressing these issues requires a fundamental shift towards more humane and legally compliant approaches to managing migration and asylum.

Self-settlement of refugees in the local areas of host countries, including those who are sometimes undocumented, presents both significant challenges and potential advantages for refugees and host communities. This mode of settlement diverges considerably from the structured environments of refugee camps, offering both opportunities and obstacles. Self-settled refugees often face substantial barriers to employment. Legal restrictions, lack of documentation, and recognition of qualifications can prevent refugees from accessing formal job markets. Consequently, many are forced to work in the informal economy, where jobs are typically low-paying, unstable, and exploitative. The inability to secure formal employment also means a lack of access to social security benefits, further exacerbating their economic vulnerability (Betts and Collier, 98: 2017). According to Jacobsen, “informal employment often subjects refugees to poor working conditions and exploitation” (Jacobsen, 6: 2005). Undocumented refugees are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, as their irregular status often precludes them from seeking help from authorities. They may face harassment, discrimination, and violence from both employers and local communities. Fear of deportation can also deter them from reporting crimes or abuses, leaving them without protection (Human Rights Watch, 42: 2021). Koser states that “the threat of detention or deportation exacerbates the vulnerabilities of undocumented refugees” (Koser, 191: 2010). Without official status, self-settled refugees have limited access to legal protections and essential services such as healthcare, education, and housing. This lack of access can severely impact their overall well-being and hinder their ability to integrate into the host society. Michel Agier points out that “the minimal social services provided in camps are insufficient to address the complex needs of refugees, leaving them in a state of prolonged vulnerability” (Agier, 56: 2011). Landau emphasizes that “access

to basic services remains a critical issue for self-settled refugees" (Landau, 317: 2006).

Challenges for host countries deserves to be highlighted from many perspectives. The influx of refugees into local job markets can create competition for jobs, particularly in low-skilled sectors. This competition can lead to tensions between refugees and local workers, who may feel that their employment opportunities are being threatened. The informal employment of undocumented refugees also complicates efforts to regulate labor markets and enforce labor standards (Malkki, 103: 1995). "The presence of undocumented refugees can distort local labor markets and create unfair competition" (Crawley and Skleparis, 51: 2018). The presence of undocumented refugees poses significant security challenges for host countries. The lack of documentation and official oversight can make it difficult to monitor and manage refugee populations, potentially allowing for the presence of individuals with criminal backgrounds. Additionally, the marginalization and exclusion of refugees can contribute to social unrest and conflict within communities (Silove, Steel, and Mollica, 1437: 2001). As noted by Mountz, "securitization of migration often leads to restrictive and punitive policies" (Mountz, 382: 2011). Ensuring the safety and well-being of both local populations and refugees is a complex task. Host countries must balance the need to provide humanitarian assistance with the imperative to maintain public order and security. This balancing act often requires significant resources and comprehensive policy frameworks, which can be challenging to implement effectively (Betts and Collier, 76: 2017). According to Aleinikoff, "effective integration policies are essential for the protection and well-being of refugees" (Aleinikoff, 575: 2015).

There are advantages of self-settlement for refugees undeniably. Compared to refugee camps, self-settlement offers greater mobility and autonomy for refugees. This freedom allows them to seek employment, pursue education, and build social networks within local communities. Such opportunities can facilitate their integration and improve their quality of life (Malkki, 82: 1995). As asserted by Crisp, "self-settlement can promote greater self-reliance among refugees" (Crisp, 32: 2003). Self-settled refugees can take advantage of economic opportunities that are not available in camps. They can start small businesses, engage in informal trade, and contribute to

the local economy. This economic participation can promote self-reliance and reduce dependency on humanitarian aid (Betts and Collier, 134: 2017). "Economic integration of refugees can have positive spillover effects on host communities" (Zetter, 179: 2007). Living within local communities can enhance the social integration of refugees. Interaction with local residents can foster mutual understanding, reduce xenophobia, and build solidarity. Refugees who are integrated into society are more likely to learn the local language, understand cultural norms, and develop a sense of belonging (Ager, 9: 2011). According to Ager and Strang, "social connections are crucial for successful integration of refugees" (Ager and Strang, 177: 2008).

In refugee camps, mobility opportunities are severely limited. Camps are often located in remote areas, isolated from local economies and communities. The restricted movement within camps inhibits refugees' ability to seek employment, education, and social integration. While camps provide essential services and a measure of security, they also create environments of dependency and stagnation. Self-settlement, on the other hand, offers refugees the potential for a more dignified and autonomous life. However, the success of self-settlement largely depends on the policies and support systems of host countries. Effective integration policies, access to legal documentation, and protection mechanisms are crucial for maximizing the benefits of self-settlement and mitigating its challenges. Self-settlement of refugees in local areas of host countries presents a complex array of challenges and opportunities. For refugees, it offers greater autonomy, mobility, and potential for economic and social integration. However, it also exposes them to significant vulnerabilities, particularly when undocumented. For host countries, self-settlement requires careful management of employment markets, security concerns, and protection frameworks to ensure the well-being of both refugees and local populations. Balancing these factors is essential for creating environments where refugees can thrive and contribute positively to their new communities.

CHAPTER THREE

BIO/NECRO POLITICAL IMPLEMENTATIONS OF WESTERN STATES

Given that migration and forced displacement have always been a matter occupying history of humanity, the massive migration proliferating especially in the 21st century due to civil wars and inter-state conflicts brought the issue of security to the foreground more than ever. The augmenting influx of migrants and refugees has affected the international relations and world politics while the issue, gaining a global scale, has extremely occupied the agendas of states, media and scholars from different fields. The debates mostly constitute the policies and perspectives about security dilemma: the individual security of refugees or the state security of host countries. Even though the concept of security has always been one of the most critical elements of governance, Foucault, scrutinizing security in relation to power, elucidates how the concept have transformed from being a mere protection of territory and sovereign to a protection and management of population starting from the 17th century. According to Foucault, that transformation was mainly triggered by the rising of mercantile economy while such historical incidents as leprosy, plague, vagabondage and the Great Confinement contributed to this transformation resulting in a new form of power: bio-power/bio-politics. Bio-politics designates the major form of contemporary governance that mainly indicates “the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life” and population (Foucault, 1978: 140). While delineating the process of evolution, Foucault divides the periods into three as the archaic, modern and contemporary which successively correspond to juridico-legal mechanisms, disciplinary mechanisms and lastly mechanisms of security, denoting that neither of them replaces the preceding one but comprises a complicated and correlative form of power relations. The ancient notion of *patria potestas* that provided the basis for the sovereign power over life in juridico-legal system gave way to disciplinary power. It should be stressed straightaway that although the former also carries a corrective and disciplinary objective like the latter, they are distinguished from each other in terms of their targets and penal systems. Whereas the disciplinary power utilizing penitentiary techniques aims the correction and the

rehabilitation of *individual* through disciplining body and soul, the archaic penal code on the other hand aims to prevent the relapse of the crime in the territory through public torture and execution instead of the correction of the culprit. To Foucault, the major reason for such a shift is the rising of mercantile economy that rendered additional labour force necessary at the time (Foucault, 1975: 25). With mercantilism, the focus shifted from the destruction to the economical usage of the body; that is, “the body and its forces, their utility and their docility, their distribution and their submission” (Foucault, 1975: 25). The primary objective of disciplinary mechanism is then to create productive and docile individuals by subjugating them and transforming them into an object of knowledge and politics. The real concern is to make the individual live in accordance with the social order, to integrate him/her in the system by optimizing his/her capabilities, and to make him/her internalize the norms thanks to the institutions like prisons and schools thanks to the continuous control, surveillance and obligations so that the system achieves to generate a self-controlling and self-disciplining individual who becomes both productive and useful.

18th century vagabondage was one of the most significant phenomena that triggered the development of disciplinary power and the security *dispositifs* in the long run. Vagabondage was the symbol of two main issues: firstly ‘dangerousness’ and ‘control’, and secondly ‘laziness’ and ‘productivity’. Vagabondage was associated with “the shift from a criminality of blood to a criminality of fraud . . . resulting in stricter methods of surveillance, a tighter partitioning of the population, more efficient techniques of locating and obtaining information” (Foucault, 1975: 77). Thus, it became a matter of police and vagabonds were seen as threat to the social order and a source of disorder and chaos, needing control and regulation through laws and institutions within the body of disciplinary system. As the vagabond was marginalized falling outside the norm and categorized neither as a producer nor a consumer in the mercantile society, s/he was either confined with the idle, unemployed and the demented, or punished. The state was not late to produce solutions and justifications to render them useful and productive. Accordingly, the evil acts of vagabonds were taught to have originated from their laziness, for this reason, making the offender work and produce was believed to keep the mind busy and purify the soul from such hazardous tendencies towards crimes (Foucault, 1975:

106). It is in this way that a new kind of institution emerged: the houses of confinement or labour houses where the useless and the dangerous are put to work and produce for the good of society. The successful integration of such marginalized people into the system through rehabilitative and punitive practices even today falls under the profession of disciplinary mechanisms.

There seems little doubt that it is also vital to elaborate on the influence of both leprosy and plague in order to better understand how the seeds of contemporary discipline society were sown. Even though the two are distinctive cases, they are not incompatible with each other in that they constitute a complementary structure contributing differently to the emergence of the disciplinary system. Michel Foucault epitomizes the influence of these two phenomena upon analyzing the change in the exercise of power and outlining its strategies and technologies. Leprosy which vanished at the end of the Middle Ages, comes to stand for the exclusion of the leper and the demarcation of a pure community marked with an illness and fixed in a place where there is no attempt to differentiate. The response to leprosy can be regarded as a practice of rejection and a sharp binary division between lepers and non-lepers while the formula to manage the phenomenon was to cut off all human contact with the leper and to prevent the dangerous mixtures. As for the plague, it differs from leprosy regarding the instruments and techniques utilized in the management of the crisis. The plague-stricken people were not completely excluded but kept in quarantine, which means that a method of meticulous partitioning grid and control of the space and relations was applied. Whereas the leper was in 'exile', the plague-stricken people were in 'arrest' (Foucault, 1975: 198). The techniques of plague then propound the control and the management of the excluded. "Generally speaking, all the authorities exercising individual control function according to a double mode; that of binary division and branding (mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal); and that of coercive assignment, of differential distribution" (Foucault, 1975: 109). Indeed, disciplinary project aims to analyze, control and alter the excluded and marked at the individual level. The response to plague in this sense underpins the contemporary form of prison and disciplinary mechanisms, for it involves in confinement, hierarchical observation, surveillance, recording & reporting info, segmentation and individualization. Such a strategy of interference

brought about the emanation of microphysics of power, which means that power permeated into the slightest parts of life and relations proving that the sovereign is entitled to interfere even in the private space when necessary. Consequently, such a permeation makes the individual a “property of society, the object of a collective and useful appropriation” (Foucault, 1975: 109). It is far too apparent that the system of disciplinary mechanisms mainly derived from the procedure carried out during plague underlies the general form of contemporary discipline society and consolidates the bio-political governance thanks to its complementary elements that enable and produce the individual in a sense.

The way to exercise power has evolved from sovereign power finally into bio-power which, Foucault defines as “power that exerts a positive influence on life, that endeavors to administer, optimize and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations” (Foucault, 1978: 137). In other words, “the ancient right to take life or let live was replaced by a power to foster life or disallow it to the point of death” (Foucault, 1978: 138). This is not to say that bio-power or bio-politics overthrows juridico-legal and disciplinary system all together but rather that it is “a way of making the old armatures of law and discipline function in addition to the specific mechanisms of security” (Foucault, 2007: 10). Bio-power or the apparatus of security offers a more complicated structure and operation of power by getting the instruments of both the disciplinary system and juridico-legal code work in its own system. Moreover, what is at stake here is that bio-power additionally deploys new tactics, technologies, strategies and formulations in addition to the existing mechanisms of governance. Yet, the three mechanisms differ from each other in terms of their focus. The legal form or the sovereign power aims to eliminate any danger to the existence of sovereign, and to protect the territory even when it is unpopulated. The disciplinary power focuses on “the body as a machine: the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls” (Foucault, 1978: 139). He characterizes that form of power as the “*anatomo-politics of the human body*” (ibid. 139, italics original). Bio-power on the other side centers on the fact that human beings are a species and mainly deals with the biological processes of human body and the conditions that may affect them.

“Their supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions and *regulatory controls: a bio-politics of the population*” (ibid. 139, italics original). Bio-power then substantially concentrates on a whole population and the conditions and the materiality surrounding it. What is more, the security works on a number of material givens and operates within a given space in contrast to the operation that the disciplinary mechanisms carry out. The primary purpose is to organize the circulation, “maximizing the positive elements, for which one provides the best possible circulation, and of minimizing what is risky and inconvenient, like theft and disease, while knowing that they will never be completely suppressed” (Foucault, 2007: 19). As in case of smallpox and scarcity in the 18th century, the attempts were to nullify the cases gradually. Foucault shows in his analysis of smallpox that the apparatus, unlike the discipline in case of leprosy, does not separate people as the sick or the healthy but rather deals with them as a whole, that is, as a population. In that respect, population as a notion comes to stand for a new political personage in the sense that it diverges from the territory and become an area of politics on which power is exercised via anew strategies and techniques within a new form of governance.

In *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault asserts that “The role of the modern state is to manage life, to ensure the health and productivity of the population” (Foucault, 2003: 241). At the core lies the security of population, the welfare of the social body as a whole. Any risk, any danger or any threat to the productivity, wellbeing and security of population is calculated, checked and regulated through the mechanisms of bio-power, and finally nullified. Herein, gathering such information as the rate of morbidity, mortality and births, the number of people affected or infected by the case and their age, the level of health etc. become substantially vital in nullifying the phenomenon in question. At this juncture, statistics as the new instrument and the calculation of possibilities play a fundamental role in that they serve as preventive components of the security *dispositifs* and enable the state to manage the crisis with the minimum cost and effort. It will be in place to remind the well-known phrase, ‘knowledge is power’. In the biopolitical power system, the norm, knowledge, regulation, surveillance, control and intervention intertwine. It is where the norm gains importance. Accordingly, those who is abnormal, thus useless

or dangerous is excluded from the society or confined. Through the correlation of knowledge and power, the state knows whom “to make live or let die”.

The exacerbating refugee flows in one way or another influence almost each state in the world making them contemplate on the issue and envisage effective strategies to deploy so that they can minimize the harm that may come from the outsiders and maximize and protect the wellbeing of their society. Herein, it will be appropriate to elaborate on two main forces shaping the base for the refugee policies of the host states. The first is the urge to maintain and fortify the capabilities of the state in terms of productivity and docility. A system that produces productive, conforming and docile individuals indeed is the precondition for the running of neo-liberal economy. The improvement of capitalism rests on “the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic population”; that is to say, bio-politics and capitalism goes hand in hand (Foucault, 1978: 141). From that perspective, the states expect to include individuals who are liable to be disciplined, subjugated and normalized within their body. The discipline determines the norm and intends to position every individual according to that norm finally marking them as normal or abnormal. The abnormal who is seen as useless and as surplus are either excluded or confined in order to secure the order and the capitalist system. Currently, almost all the refugees are positioned outside the norm, taught as posing threat to the welfare of the host state and the way of life. Most of the states are unwilling to accept asylum seekers due to the fact that they assume the refugees do not fit within the norms they have generated so far. For this reason, the application processes of most refugees are protracted and stayed unresolved as the states are most likely to analyze the profile of the applicant carefully if not to intend to dissuade him/her. Alexander Betts argues that the establishment of refugee regime relies on the emergence of the modern state system (Betts, 2014: 63). As expected, the responses of host countries to people who are on the move are more radical today than it was in the pre-modern era because the number of refugees or migrants was notably manageable and controllable at that time. They were not seen as a threat for the allocation of local resources and social services, or as a cause for competition in labor market; on the contrary, the states used to celebrate their arrival due to their contributions thanks to their professions and the

money they bring with. Currently, the refugees are so much more that the states perceive them as a burden and an irregular crowd that is difficult to control and incorporate into their society both economically and socially.

It is commonly believed that repatriation appears as the best solution to mitigate the current refugee crisis (Gibney, 2014: 56). Because the prolonged procedures and the difficulty in integrating the refugees into the societal structures with minimum cost and maximum security create precarious scenarios not only for the refugees but also for the host countries. In this vein, the asylum-granting states look out for their own interests as the bio-politics suggests and they choose to insert the elements into their constitution which only serve to preserve or improve their existing order. It is quite expectable that most of the western countries accede to grant asylum mostly to refugees who possess university degrees and professional qualifications in fields such as engineering, healthcare and education. As noted by the International Labor Organization (ILO), “A survey of Syrian refugees resettled in Germany found that over 50% had completed secondary education, and around 30% held university degrees” (ILO, 2019: 27). In a report, Brookings Institution gives the examples of Germany and Canada where the refugees with no formal education are employed at lower rates compared with the educated (Brookings, 2018: 35). In parallel with this, the UNCHR report displays that the uneducated individuals are more disadvantageous in finding jobs while this makes them depend on the social aid programs (UNCHR, 2001: 54). That is not to say that those refugees with high levels of education and qualification can readily take place in the labor market; in fact, they face various challenges and obstacles because of factors like language and re-certification barriers. In the same way, Morrice approves that the similar situation applies to the well-educated refugees in the U.K. as well (308) Still, refugees with educational and professional advantages are more likely to be recruited in jobs that suit their professions rather than working well below their qualifications (Brookings, 2018: 19). Despite the fact that there is a disproportion between the qualifications of refugees and the quality of jobs that they get, one should concentrate on the primary objective during the processes of acceptance. Rajesh Kumar points out that the factor of high-level education makes the applicant refugees more desirable and increases the possibility of their acceptance in the end (Kumar, 2021: 145).

From the perspective of host states, the underlying idea to prefer refugees with such profiles indicated above is that they have the potential to abide by the necessities of being a member of discipline society; a potential for docility and productivity that is preemptive for the capitalist economy. John Smith affirms that the asylum-granting states embrace a biopolitical approach in the selective processes and prioritize the applications that may optimize and enrich both the economical and the social life (Smith, 2020: 34). Moreover, even though these strangers were subjected to disciplinary system and institutions in different societies, their institutional background proves their liability to develop self-controlling mechanisms and to internalize the norms of society of which they become a part. Both the adaptation skills and the contribution to the economic growth underpin the refugee asylum policies while these factors are extremely associated with educational and professional background. Such individuals are more likely to integrate into society in many terms and they will possibly less depend on the refugee social assistance. Self-sufficient individuals not only enhance the economy but also reduce the cost in the long run for the host states that is witnessed especially in the protracted refugee situations. As the processes of application prolonged, the expenses increase since all the spaces that is populated with the refugees like the detention centers, refugee camps, self-settlements in the local area requires forces and mechanisms of arrangements and security. In addition to the economic concerns, security is the foremost focus of the host countries since securitization is an umbrella term comprising all the elements of a population from economy, social order, mental health to integrity. For this reason, modern states come to deploy bio-political strategies and policies while western states are those that invest most on the issue. As Foucault puts forward in *Security, Territory, Population*, states develop mechanisms to manage populations and secure territories “so as to optimize a state of life” while this optimization involves classifying and controlling groups deemed as ‘risky’ (Foucault, 2007: 11). Emma Haddad in relation to this, points out that

“If questions of membership, territory and legitimacy become security issues, persons will accordingly be given ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’ status. Each individual will either add to the internal security of the community or threaten its cohesion by not belonging. An organised political entity is ‘internally peaceful, territorially enclosed and impenetrable to aliens’, preserving its identity in the face of threats from those who may want to destroy it”. (Haddad, 2008: 49)

In order to protect the entity that Haddad speak of, Western states erect impassable walls that keep “the werewolf” outside their lands. Strangely enough, “The refugee is included while being excluded and excluded while being included” just like the leper or the plague-stricken people in history (Diken, 2004: 84). Foucault indicates that the meaning and the values that were associated with the leper as a symbolic figure persisted for centuries in different guises (Foucault, 1988: 6). Contemporary refugees today take the leper’s place that was also occupied once by the vagabonds, the demented, the criminals and the idle in a similar way. They were seen as the figures who pester society with chaos and idleness while the leprosy and the plague were correlated with the contagiousness; contagiousness of not only the sickness but also the meaning attached to it. The underlying themes of ‘dangerousness’ and ‘control’ that was attributed to them remain consistent demonstrating a continuity in how marginalized groups are perceived, managed and regulated. Likewise, the refugees are often viewed through the lens of suspicion and such a perception results in a tendency to exclude and supervise. The techniques employed during the plague are today repeated in refugee camps and detention centers in the same way. They are surrounded by the fences, put to surveillance by the guards, and inspected through the checkpoints, which are the basic devices of disciplinary system. However, the employment of these mechanisms does not aim to correct or rehabilitate or integrate as supposed to be for the citizen of the host country. The very reason for building refugee camps in the first place is then to keep the refugees away from the center and the local people so that they will be prevented from penetrating into the local area and from occupying the social services and resources. In that way, the states expect to keep the movements of refugees under control and to eliminate the harm that may come from the unknown.

Through knowledge, one can control, regulate and intervene. What is unknown is formidable. In that sense, what the Western world is scared is the possible corruption of their local and cultural order with regard to the arrival of newcomers about whom they know little. Vamik Volkan, relevant to this, stresses upon the reactions of nation states to globalization, and technological advancements that have accelerated and facilitated the process of globalization, particularly with the beginning of 20th century. He also addresses the neo-racism and xenophobia in

Germany beginning with the arrival of guest laborers from countries like Greece, Turkey, and Tunisia in 1950s and 60s; following with 235.000 refugees from Yugoslavia in 1992. He adds such perception of the Other was also the case in different parts of Europe at that time, and notes the discrimination, violence and animosity against outsiders. The massive migration flow has ineluctably reinforced that fear. (Volkan, 2019: 16-19). Bauman asserts that such fear has almost caused a “moral panic” which can be explained as the fear towards a group of people who are suspected to threaten the well-being and the social order of society (Bauman, 2016: 9). Additionally, the citizens of the host countries also have economic anxieties besides the social and cultural in that they think refugees come and steal their jobs while their states also share again economic concerns in terms of distribution of resources.

Anthony Giddens’ conceptualization of ontological security may help us analyze the fear that pervades the local citizens of host countries. Giddens defines the terms as a sense of continuity in events and self-identity, and consistency with the social and physical environment (Giddens, 1991: 243). “Obsessive exaggeration of risks to personal existence, extreme introspection and moral vacuity” can be regarded as the main characteristics of ontologically insecure individuals (Possamai-Inesedy, 2002: 27) while feeling ontologically secure is only possible when the relationships with important others are routinized (Mitzen, 2006: 341).¹ The significant point here is that the individual feels ontologically secure when knowing which dangers and risks to confront and which to ignore, how to react and how to act. So, strangers are fearsomely unpredictable and in the first place *strange* from the perspective of local people in Western countries. Because of that, Bauman says, there comes out contradictory impulses of “mixhopilia” and “mixophobia”; that is, the attraction towards the different and unexplored experiences, and the fear of the unknown and the uncontrollable. (Bauman, 2016: 12) Likewise, Henrietta Moore denotes that “individuals interviewed in Australia were generally enthusiastic about differences and engagements with others . . . but these positive elements were accompanied

¹ Here, I would like to clarify a point about refugees; it is a definite thing that refugees face challenges throughout -even before- their journey that render them ontologically more insecure since their whole environment change and the actors they attach are considerably lost. Nevertheless, this study concentrates basically on the people who dwell in the host countries.

equally by discourses of fear and anxiety, worries about global homogeneity and suspicion of others” (Moore, 2013: 99). Even though people celebrate the differences, they fear the newcomers will not be able to fit in their life and adopt the customs and the norms.

That fear of the Other, in this scenario the refugees, manifests itself in various forms in media, politics, art and daily life. Media overflows with the news of massive migration of refugees exacerbating the fear and anxieties on the side of host countries. The most influential ones are suggesting the association of refugees with terrorism and the assumptions of each as potential terrorists. As many can remember, Alan Kurdi at the age of three has become the face of the tragedy of all faceless refugees after he got drowned in the Mediterranean Sea. That incident has led several Western states confront what they turned their faces and listen to their conscience. They announced to accept more refugees in their countries. However, two months later, 2015 Paris terrorist attacks have reversed the situation, even become a catalyst in employing strict border policies. Uçarer summarizes the general frame of the policies by asserting that we are at the point of a “shift from the protection of asylum seekers to protection from them.” (qtd. in Newman, 2003: 7). One of the most radical leaders, the Prime Minister of Hungary, Victor Orban proclaimed his anti-refugee stance saying that “All terrorists are migrants” (qtd. in Bauman, 2016: 23). Again, it is Hungarian government who erected walls to protect his backyard by building wire fences so that the aliens could not get in. Indeed, that is a strategy of security that they employed via new technologies of bio-politics in order to preclude the arrival of asylum seekers or to deter them even from coming to their gates. It is no surprise that right-wing parties has begun to gain power especially after 2015 as many voters agreed on the idea that refugees do not belong to their world. To illustrate, the far-right party leader, Geert Wilders came out on top in the Dutch parliamentary elections. The Islamophobic party had promised to ban mosques and made a call for a freeze on asylum and a more restrictive immigration policy (Armstrong, 2023: n. pag.). Another example is from Dover, United Kingdom. Local people there demanded from the authorities to limit the number of refugees to be accepted in their country declaring that they are posing a threat to the existing structure and fabric of society and the way of life. In Germany, two graffiti artists, Oğuz Şen and Justus

Becker, draw Alan Kurdi's picture on a wall so that it can raise awareness on the local people. However, that picture of Alan displaying his body on the shore is spoiled by far-right radicals and they left a note on the picture saying that "borders save lives". When the entrance of the asylum seekers from the borders cannot be hindered, meta borders are drawn inside the countries and the urban planning is prepared accordingly. That is why, the refugee camps are almost always outside the city bearing the liminal space for refugees who are neither inside nor outside. To use Sennet's striking phrase, refugee camps or detention centers serve as "urban condom" which protects the local people from all kinds of threats that could be posed by the newcomers (Sennet, 1994: 228). The detention centers in Nauru and Christmas islands, and Woomera refugee camp in Australia can be examples of non-places and a zone of indistinction between inclusion and exclusion.

It is possible to observe how the biopolitical methods of Western states affect the refugees and how the motto "make live or let die" works to enable the local citizens and disable the refugees on the move. Abandoned by their state and deprived of a legal status and recognition, asylum seekers appeal to the Article 14.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution. Nevertheless, the host countries do not lean towards their penetrating their borders. They turn their faces from the refugees through employing strict border policies and lay them aside by watching them suffer to death in many cases. Because of legal restrictions and regulations, expensive and lengthy process of legal applications and the need to reach a secure sense of self drives refugees to apply for illegal ways to pass the borders. At that point, smuggling becomes a crucial factor that poses insecure conditions for both refugees and the host countries. Smugglers indeed make use of refugees and other migrants economically and in other ways. The fees the smugglers charge migrants/asylum seekers make them vulnerable in that the economically desperate people are exposed to such conditions as exploitation, unhealthy conditions and hunger. The fees may be strikingly costly according to the profile of the person even though the routes or the means to the negotiated destination may not promise a safe and comfortable journey. Moreover, smuggled refugees are also vulnerable to a range of other forms of crime. Some of the frequently reported ones experienced by smuggled migrants include

violence, rape, theft, kidnapping, extortion and trafficking in persons. (UNODC, 2018: 9). According to the data obtained from the International Organization for Migration, 58 % of the deaths were caused by drowning in sea routes, 19% is due to illness and difficult conditions. (UNODC, 2018: 9) The number of people who died during their journey to cross the borders is estimated over 28.000 in Mediterranean, over 14.000 in Africa, over 8.000 in Americas, and over 5.000 in Asia since 2014.² Even though those people could manage to reach in the door of a host state, their struggle does not end there due to the bio-political mechanisms that secure her people and necro-political stance against refugees that somehow help them die as elaborated before.

The camps and detention centers are the responses of states to the refugee problem although self-sufficient refugees who are legally recognized are allowed to settle outside the camps. Even though minimum treatment conditions are enumerated in the 1951 Convention, the refugees are exposed to several inhumane and illegal treatments in the camps. Denial of the rights such as freedom of movement and searching for employment possibilities consolidate refugees' vulnerability as they most of the time depend on the diminishing international assistance. Limiting the access to the local area and the opportunities of getting jobs is a strategy to control the refugees, in this way, they become dependent on outer sources. It is very common that being reliant to the social or international assistance leads to various precarious situations for the refugees. At times, it becomes difficult to even reach basic needs since "The aid pipeline is often vulnerable to problems with funding and logistics that mean goods are delivered in reduced volumes, late, or not at all" (Bakewell, 2014: 133). Although the host states are disturbed by the prolonged presence of asylum seekers in camps since this increases the cost in the long run and causes deficiencies of security, they provide the basis for conditions that protract the stay of the inmates of the camps. Another critical point of being a refugee whether inside camps or outside camps is that sexual and physical violence can also become prevalent in refugee camps, while refugee women, children, the elderly, and disabled all suffer from the deficiency of protection especially when their stay is protracted. Similarly, the self-settled refugees without legal documents living in the local area

² See <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/data> for further information

are also discriminated, cannot reach social services and find a shelter or a job to live on like a dignified citizen since they are deprived of the legal protection supplied by citizenship (Milner, 2014: 155). As the length of stay is prolonged, it gets harder to sustain a sense of self for the asylum seekers. Even though camps are transitory places, they often prove to be a permanent transience. “The average duration of a refugee situation is now closer to 20 years. As a result, several generations of the same family can now be found in many refugee camps” (Milner, 2014: 153). Where refugees remain in camps for many years, the buildings may come to resemble the permanent structures of the local area. Buduburam refugee camp and older sections of Meheba refugee settlements can be shown as examples of such structures and permanent nature of those temporary and transitory non-places.

CHAPTER FOUR

A LAND OF PERMANENT GOODBYES BY ATIA ABAWI

Considering that Atia Abawi herself was born to refugee parents who fled Afghanistan in 1979 following the Soviet invasion, it is no surprise that she could poignantly give voice to the plight of refugees in her novel, *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* (*Permanent Goodbyes*)-(2018). Apart from being a child of refugee parents -though she is not a refugee herself-, the strength of her narration certainly comes from her firsthand observation and knowledge gained in places where the war, the oppression, and the inner/outer conflicts torn apart the usual life and routines severely. Abawi's career as a journalist seems to have extremely affected her stories and novels. In the beginning, she worked for local TV stations, then she was out in the field after anchoring CNN, later NBC News. She was assigned to be the foreign news correspondent for nearly five years in Afghanistan while she also covered and reported on prominent incidents such as the Iraq war, the Gaza Flotilla attack, the military coup in Egypt and Benazir Bhutto assassination (Abawi, n.pag.: 2023). As a matter of course, her works are Middle East based. In that sense, *The Secret Sky: A Novel of Forbidden Love in Afghanistan* (2014) is her debut novel set in Afghanistan as the title already suggested. The first sparkle igniting her desire to write her second novel, *Permanent Goodbyes* is illuminating and it was nothing but her empathy for the Syrian refugees. When she saw the harsh conditions they were going through on TV, she was taking care of her baby at her apartment in Jerusalem (Byron, n.pag.: 2019), which was thanks to her parents who once had to set an undesirable but enforced journey just like those people.

Abawi wanted to give voice to all these people not only through her journalist reports and interviews but also through her novel. Because she believes "[W]ith my novels, I've been able to go deeper into complex stories. I've been able to share the truth in a way I could never do as a journalist" (qtd. In Byron, n.pag.: 2019). As such, Abawi is a devoted author and journalist whose primary concern is to raise awareness, create empathy and understanding, and open the ways for inclusive

compassion. Her second novel, *Permanent Goodbyes* also successfully serves this very purpose. It evidently echoes the brutal realities of politics and life in the strongest sense. To be able to reflect the truth and to penetrate into the stories of refugees, Abawi travelled to Turkey and Greece where she made a detailed research and talked to people from Syria and many other countries, listening to their experiences inside and outside their countries. Those people were ranging from asylum seekers to volunteers and locals. (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). She says the process of research and writing of the novel was hard and emotional since she believes it was a significant “responsibility” to share such a difficult and serious issue (Ibid; 2018). She offers a heartbreaking journey of a teenage boy in the hope of finding a more secure and promising ‘home’; a story of a life out of millions that have been doomed to be not lives lived but numbers to be counted.

Permanent Goodbyes is a novel about “permanent goodbyes”; goodbye to beloved ones, to memories, to home. Tareq’s is just one among many stories that captures the loss, pain and suffering of leaving everything behind permanently. To make an emphasis on this, Abawi chooses Destiny as the narrator, who witnesses all the good and bad sides of lives of people indiscriminately and watches everything from an objective distance. In the prologue, Destiny speaks up and clearly explicates her role in peoples’ lives drawing attention to her neutrality in telling what happens, and eventually defines herself as “the end of a sequence of events that you and your kind actively shape” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). What she stresses upon is that it is the actions of people which pave the way to Destiny, not the Destiny herself just like what happens to Tareq and his family.

Tareq and his loving family lives in an unmentioned city in war-torn Syria. One day, an airstrike by the government forces destroys Tareq’s house on a summer evening in 2015 killing his mother, grandmother and three siblings -Ameer, Sameer and Farrah while his brother, Salim is assumed to be dead, yet his body could not be found. Losing his beloved ones, Tareq’s father wants to save his son and his little daughter, Susan, so he decides to leave Syria despite of the risks that may wait on the way. Needing money to be able to flee the country, they need to go to Raqqa first where Fayed’s brother lives. Passing through several check points under the surveillance of different armed groups, they manage to arrive in Raqqa, the nominal

capital of ISIS. However, they lose almost all the money they have to the teen fighters in check points. In Raqqa, Tareq witnesses the brutal system of ISIS when he accompanies his cousin, Musa for shopping. They are forced to watch a public execution at Naim Square when they are noticed outside the shop by the fighters there. After the execution finalizes, Musa and Tareq leave the square to go home but are followed by the same fighters who are to visit them the following day. Daesh was picking up young boys like Tareq and Musa to train as fighters in their “indoctrinating” camps. That visit makes Fayed hurry to leave while Musa’s father Waleed also decides to send Musa with them. No matter how hard, they succeed in crossing the Turkish border. Fayed and Susan stays in Gaziantep; Musa and Tareq go to Istanbul in order to see if the city is livable. They find jobs mostly paid daily and earn much more less than the local people do. Sometimes their lack of legal work permit is abused and they are paid nothing. Since Tareq cannot tolerate the exploitation they are exposed in any moment, believing that they have a greater chance and better conditions in Europe, he sets out to get Izmir where he meets his father and Susan to take a boat trip to Greece. As for Musa, he prefers staying in Istanbul to study there and be a doctor like his father. Secondly, he wants to be with Shayma, a refugee girl he met in “Little Syria”, whom he is planning to marry.

After Tareq reunites with his father and Susan in Izmir, they begin contemplating on how to reach Greece, and search for smugglers in Basmane, a district where human smuggling is discreetly negotiated. As the money they have falls short for the three of them, Fayed decides to send Tareq and Susan initially agreeing to meet them soon. Tareq and Susan take their places in waiting spot on the shore where they meet two sisters from Afghanistan, Najiba and Jamila. They become friends with each other sharing their grief and experiences in their own countries as much as their communicative skills in English may allow. The unfortunate separation of two sisters who are made to board in different dingies by the smugglers consolidates the tie between Jamila and Tareq. They manage to reach the Greek island, Lesbos at the end of a journey full of hardships and casualties which the passengers see worth risking. Lesbos becomes a place where two stories intersect; Tareq as an asylum seeker and Alexia as one of the caring helpers to look for that Abawi refers via Fred Rogers’ words in the beginning of the novel (Abawi, n.pag.:

2018). Alexia is a collage student from America who have come to Greece for a vacation but decides to stay as a volunteer to help refugees whose desperate conditions there make her heart ache.

Alexia was one of the volunteers who are ready to help the new comers bypassing the Turkish coast guards and managing not to capsize their overcrowded rubber boats. Alexia and the crew there witness several examples in which the boats are made to return to Turkey or people are washed away by the Eagean sea, some of whose bodies are found by the fishermen or the crew. In one of those days, the first encounter with Alexia occurs when Tareq's dinghy reaches the coast. He was looking for someone to help Susan who was still and dehydrated just like many. Susan comes to herself thanks to the immediate medical response. Tareq and Jamila could find her sister, Najiba in the camp they have been taken. In the meantime, they get closer with Alexia and some other helpers while they spend time together in the camps and the tents settled for different purposes such as medical aid, clothes and food. These people coming from different countries share the burden of the plight and lighten the pain of the experiences of Tareq and the sisters. However, Susan was kidnapped by a taxi driver in disguise while Tareq and Alexia is looking for a new jacket for Susan from the tents, which is said to be a common incident in the island. A doctor, Siddiqa and her son, Dave joined Tareq and Alexia to find little Susan. After a long search, Alexia finds Susan locked inside a boat with other children while the man who kidnapped Susan is drinking with a friend at a cafe near the boat. Just saving the children, she is noticed by the armed man who has attacked Alexia but fortunately is caught by Tareq and Dave. Following such a heart pounding night, Tareq and Jamila with their sisters set out for Macedonia making their farewells with their new friends. When they get the Macedonian border, they find it closed due to security concerns of the government. They are made to wait just outside the border in cold weather and with no sufficient food. That night, two children and one adult die because of hard conditions. After spending the freezing night outside, Tareq and his group continue towards initially to Serbia, then Crotia and Slovenia when the border is opened to transit routes. They finally arrive in Austria where Tareq and Jamila separated from each other since Jamila and Najiba leave for Frankfurt to live with their aunt. Tareq and Susan also head for Germany but a different city. For this

reason, they keep in touch while he submits an application to reunite with his father and Salim who is with Fayed. Tareq learns that he has not been dead but kept by Daesh and managed to escape. A new era starts in their life in a new country populated with people some of whom look with compassionate eyes and ready to help whereas some of them look with suspicion.

Atia Abawi not only displays the inhumane and precarious conditions that people are exposed to inside and outside Syria but also she becomes the voice of many displaced people from other countries as well. She proposes a story displaying the realities of refugee crisis, the reactions and the motivations of host countries regarding the issue, the consequences of border policies for the refugees and their abandonment to the bare life. To be able to construe the novel in depth but within a clear framework, it will be in place to ramify the chapter into subtitles. Also, in order to better understand the impact of the intra-conflict and the power relations on people in Syria, I will briefly explain the Syrian Civil War and the roots of the war. Secondly, I will analyze the atmosphere and the life in Syria in order to demonstrate that the figure of homo sacer first emerges as a result of the “bare life” that the characters are confined in their home countries. Lastly, I will examine the conditions and the government policies in host countries and the consequences of these acts for refugees. I will elaborate on how the state of exception lead to the emergence of a space that renders necropolitics possible both in Syria, and beyond Syria via biopolitics as the other side of the coin.

4.1. THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR

It is quite possible to say that the roots of the conflict in Syria indeed go back to WWI when France mandated Syria, following a strategy that divided the population in terms of religion, geography and ethnicity in order to prevent any potential organization against French rule. The influence of such structure formed years before has never alleviated; on the contrary, it has fueled the intra-conflicts in the region even today. Yet, the fact that the Assad family took over the rule in 1970 as a result of a military coup -the last one among several after the independence in 1946-, is crucial in eruption of the civil war. It was Hafez al-Assad, father of Bashar

al-Assad and the defense minister at the time, who seized the power in 1970. It is necessary to emphasize that the Assad family belongs to the Alawite sect, a minority group in Syria in the face of Sunni majority. Hafez al-Assad decided in favor of his own Alawite community, assigning them to critical government positions, which ineluctably resulted in reactions and resistance on the side of Sunni majority. During his rule, he adopted a repressive and authoritarian regime by implementing heightened armed control. For instance in 1982, “Muslim Brotherhood uprising in Hama is suppressed in a month-long siege by the military, who killed an estimated 10-40,000 civilians” (BBC News: 2025). After his death in 2000, his presidency was succeeded by his son, Bassar al-Assad. He in the same way maintained his father’s political and governmental system. The elections were neither free nor fair and the presidency has been the central and ultimate decision-making body. The citizens were deprived of their very civil liberties such as right to life, right to security, right to private property and freedom of expression.

The demonstrations and uprisings in 2010 taking place in some countries in the Middle East and North Africa, marked as Arab Spring in history caused a domino effect. Not surprisingly the anti-government protests and uprisings showed up also in Syria in March 2011, ending up with the Syrian Civil War that has not come to a definite conclusion yet. To manage the unrest and to keep the demonstrations under control, President Assad deployed a strategy prioritizing the military intervention without any concern for civilian casualties. The unrest in the country culminated and ended up in multi-polarity of power. The demonstrations spread all over the country expeditiously. In 2012, a coalition was formed by different opposing groups consisting in both the extremist (the most known is to be ISIS sooner) and the moderate Islamic groups and also the Kurdish. As a coping strategy, the Assad regime menaced to put chemical weapons into use, which caused several international powers to get involved in the war as the supporters of rebel groups, in addition to international pro-Syrian government actors. Due to the lack of unitary sovereign power and resulting partition of space in the country, the governance of multi-polar power elements has become inevitable. The area of influence of some rebel groups grew stronger, most notably ISIS whose nominal capital was Raqqa. It is not that all the rebel groups united and fought against the government; indeed,

these groups also fought against each other. As Robert S. Ford puts it, the country was divided into three major zones: the first one was under the control of the Syrian government whose forces and population was mostly centering in Western Syria and was backed by Iran and Russia; the second was Northwestern Syria where Syrian government and opposition groups dominated by extremist ISIS are vying, under surveillance of Türkiye on the border; the last one occupies eastern Syria that was populated by a mixed Kurdish-Arab rebel group (Ford, 1: 2019). In 2014, The Islamic State/ISIS seized Aleppo in 2014. In 2016, the Syrian government retrieved Aleppo thanks to the assistance of international allies, which was to be lost to non-government groups in 2024 for the second time. In the same year, Turkey involved in the civil war by conducting a military intervention and invading the northeastern Syria. Since 2016, the Turkish government carried out three operations -in 2016; 2018; 2019- in the region in total and regarded them as attempts to secure its southern border and create a safe zone for the refugees to return to their homeland (Human Rights Watch: 2024). Moreover, Turkey still resumes its military and administrative control in the region through intelligence agencies and collaboration with local groups there.

President Assad had been expected to remain in power till 2024 given that the government had been supported by Iran, Russia and Hezbollah- especially Russian attacks on ISIS and Free Syrian Army in 2015 secured Assad's position. Last but not least, Syria was re-membered in the Arab League in 2023.³ However, the conflict between Iran, Israel and Hezbollah dramatically changed the course of events for the Assad regime resulting in lost of first Aleppo and Hama and later Damascus; escape of President Assad reportedly to Russia; and the announcement of a transitional government by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham. (Loft and Kirk-Wade, 2: 2024). Moreover, Israel has declared that it has undertaken the control of Golan Heights, buffer zone whereas the territorial tension among several opposing groups still continues.

4.2. NECRO-POLITICS AND THE STATE OF EXCEPTION: VICTIMS AS FIGURES OF HOMO SACER

³ Upon refusing peace making insisted by the Arab League during the conflict, the membership of Syria had been suspended in 2011.

The story opens up with a prologue by Destiny, the narrator of the novel:

I consider myself simply the end of a sequence of events that you and your kind actively shape. I don't like to be held liable for the evils in the world. ... I am just the end result of your choices. ... I am not the reason why hearts can be so dark. I can't even take credit for the ones who do good. ... So yes, you wereborn to die. But in between, you are meant to live. If we run into each other prematurely, it's not because of my negligence. And often not because of yours. Your world controls me; I do not control you. I am Destiny. (Abawi,n.pag.: 2018).

She also adds that “You were born to die. But when that happens is not up to me. It’s up to humanity and - all too often - the lack of it” (ibid. n.pag.; 2018 Italics original). Destiny’s remarks unravel profound insights into the novel’s central concern with human agency and moral responsibility in the face of suffering and displacement. The use of a third-person omniscient narrator is particularly significant because it enables Abawi to step beyond the limited viewpoint of any single character and reveal the broader, interconnected systems of power that shape the lives --and deaths-- of displaced people in a detached and objective way, allowing for a critical depiction of structural violence without being confined to emotional immediacy or personal bias. This narrative stance --marked by its all-knowing perspective and capacity to shift across time, space, and consciousness --underscores the systemic nature of the forces at play, positioning Destiny not only as a narrator but as a symbolic force that reflects the consequences of geopolitical structures and sovereign decisions that instrumentalize human lives within systems of control, extraction and abandonment. In other words, Abawi’s naming her narrator Destiny is no coincidence, for Destiny serves as both a witness and a warning of what will happen when “humanity” becomes a bystander, not assuming any collective responsibility or ethical accountability for the suffering it enables or ignores. In fact, “humanity” becomes a rhetorical guise that conceals the disjuncture between the lived realities of refugees and the calculated policies and norms that govern them-- policies that often operate within a framework of securitization and deterrence rather than protection and care. In short, Destiny by framing the refugee crisis as the outcome of a pervasive lack of humanity, shifts the focus away from individual choices toward the global structures—legal, political, and economic—that perpetuate displacement and devalue certain lives. In this way, Destiny’s voice illuminates how the fate of refugees is not only shaped by violent conflict, but also by the expostulation of the

policies implemented by international governments that render them invisible, rightless, and trapped in a state of permanent “state of exception.”

As several critics and scholars propose, the irrepressible refugee crisis is indeed a consequence of miscalculated policies of world powers, mostly Western states. (Bauman: 2016; Zizek: 2016; and Al Kassimi: 2023) Zizek names it as a project of “New World Order” (Zizek, n. pag.: 2016) while Al Kassimi propounds that what happens in the Middle East is a deliberate “implementation of a New Middle East” ensuing the Bush Doctrine, where “‘chaos’ and ‘destruction’ are simply ... a means to an end” (Al-Kassimi, 3: 2023). Discussing on the Second Iraq War as an example of risk management, Ulrich Beck, on the other hand, comments on the issue telling that

[W]orld risk society is faced by the awkward problem ... of having to make decisions about life and death, war and peace, on the basis of more or less unadmitted not-knowing - because the dilemma lies also in the fact that the option which relies on there being no danger is equally based on not-knowing and is equally high risk, in the sense that terrorists really could acquire weapons of mass destruction and do so precisely because we believe in not being able to know and hence do nothing. (Beck, 335: 2006)

As seen, dependence on possibility of a danger, indeed, put many innocent displaced people in jeopardy. Moreover, Beck’s concept of “reflexivity of risk” offers an additional perspective; as such, each policy conducted somewhere in the world has an inevitable influence on the decision maker as much as it does on the target. As Destiny unfolds, the decisions and actions of Western powers in the Middle East work like a boomerang, at the same time wreaking havoc on the lives of innumerable individuals in those regions.

Whilst the interventions of the Western powers in the region lead to an accrescent influx of refugees into their territories, the denizens of those nations are reduced to a state of “bare life” as conceptualized by Giorgio Agamben, both within and outside their countries. There are several factors consolidating the position of these people as victims of the conflict and pushing them to the state of “bare life”. The multipolarity of power and of governance due to vying groups over partitioned territories, restricted access to the resources, deprivation of fundamental human rights and civil liberties, relentless threat of death and arbitrary arrest, and expropriation can be counted as the major elements that make the refugees to live in

the margins of the political life/bios.⁴ In that sense, it will be a right decision to utilize Foucauldian biopolitics, Mbembe's necropolitics and Agamben's concept of state of exception with the figure of homo sacer in scrutinizing the underlying political and social factors having nonlegible impacts on refugees in the novel.

Although Michel Foucault conceptualized modern forms of governance through biopolitics, Giorgio Agamben and Achille Mbembe have significantly expanded upon its limitations, introducing their own theoretical frameworks to address its shortcomings. While Foucault defines biopolitics as the management of life and populations, he emphasizes its productive, generative, enabling and regulatory functions rather than its oppressive or destructive aspects. Biopolitical power does not overthrow the preceding modalities of power; rather, it incorporates the elements of both legal structures and disciplinary mechanisms, establishing a complex yet interdependent relationship between them. Ultimately, its primary aim is to preserve and strengthen well-being of society as a whole, positioning the individual as both the subject and object of politics. On the international level, biopolitics functions as a crucial tool for nations to fortify their populations and internal dynamics within the broader geopolitical order. However, biopolitics represents only one side of the coin. The other, more sinister counterpart is necropolitics, as theorized by Achille Mbembe. Whereas biopolitics functions by sustaining life, it simultaneously necessitates the elimination of those perceived as threats to the favored population; that is to say, the sovereign let the Other die. It not only facilitates killing indirectly but actively enacts it—a phenomenon that can be described in no terms other than Mbembe's necropolitics. In this regard, necropolitics reveals the darker underpinnings of sovereign power, demonstrating how the management of life is inherently intertwined with the capacity to authorize death. For this reason, necropolitics and biopolitics are not merely intertwined but mutually constitutive, each reinforcing the other's mechanisms of control. The apparatus through which necropolitical rule is enforced —necropower— becomes the dominant mode of governance within the conditions established by what

⁴ Giorgio Agamben explains two distinct terms for life used in Ancient Greece: Zoe and Bios. The former refers to the simple form of life that all the living beings share, which is the 'bare life' whereas the latter indicates a particular way of life peculiar to a group or an individual. What is at stake is a qualified life and human politics concerning the distinction between the two. (Agamben 9-10; 1998)

Agamben defines as the state of exception. Within this political order where law is in suspension, sovereign power operates without constraint, transforming the exceptional into the norm and rendering violence a structural component of rule. The political figure that emerges from this state of exception is, on the other hand, homo sacer—the individual reduced to bare life, stripped of legal protections, and simultaneously both excluded from the juridical order and entirely subject to sovereign violence. *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* offers a concise yet intricately woven narrative that encapsulates the complex and interdependent exercise of these power structures. Within the novel, individuals are condemned to the condition of homo sacer as a natural consequence of state of exception, and reduced to mere objects of necropower's absolute dominion.

Accordingly, the living conditions and the daily life in Syria are depicted as fragile, complex and chaotic in *Permanent Goodbyes* while death is all around. The narrator starts her story with a poignant scene where the main character, Tareq, is engulfed in agony and terror as their apartment is bombarded, leaving his body buried beneath the rubble. However, it is revealed that “it was just another bad dream. He'd been having a lot of them lately” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Later, we discover that it is Tareq's genuine experience, cleverly woven into the narrative to illustrate how the haunting nightmares tormenting these individuals seamlessly become their stark realities in an instant. Between these two distressing scenes, the author presents an excerpt from Tareq's life, showcasing the perpetual apprehension of losing the beloved and the impending presence of mortality as the source of nightmares. Bombs are launched indiscriminately at any moment, taking the lives of countless civilians—both those known and unknown to Tareq and his family—regardless of age or gender. This precarious reality extends far beyond Tareq's city; throughout the country, people live in constant fear in the face of the risk of imminent death. Not only is their right to security and life entirely unprotected, but they are also deprived of other essential resources and fundamental freedoms; they are simply forced to endure a state of bare life—stripped of legal rights and basic human security.

The conditions in such a country ravaged by civil war demand a comprehensive analysis that considers both its causes and far-reaching consequences. Most notably, considering the prevailing circumstances in Syria, the state of

exception has become the dominant framework of governance, creating the very conditions that allow necropolitics and the state of siege to flourish. As Achille Mbembe explains, the state of siege is:

“The state of siege is itself a military institution. It allows a modality of killing that does not distinguish between the external and the internal enemy. Entire populations are the target of the sovereign. The besieged villages and towns are sealed off and cut off from the world. Daily life is militarized. Freedom is given to local military commanders to use their discretion as to when and whom to shoot. Movement between the territorial cells requires formal permits. Local civil institutions are systematically destroyed. The besieged population is deprived of their means of income. Invisible killing is added to outright executions”. (Mbembe, 30: 2003)

Every aspect of Mbembe’s description of the state of siege finds its counterpart in the novel *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes*. People killed with impunity, waging wars among distinct groups rather than inter-state wars, immobilization and check points between cities controlled by different independent groups, arbitrary shootings, public executions are some. The novel fundamentally serves as a reflection of real-life experiences; in this context, the report by Human Rights Watch on Turkish-occupied territory presents a parallel depiction of impunity and chaos to that portrayed in the novel:

“The military incursions led to massive displacement and were fraught with serious abuses of both human rights and humanitarian law, including indiscriminate shelling, summary killings, unlawful arrests, torture and enforced disappearances, and systematic pillaging and unlawful seizure of property” (Human Rights Watch, n.pag.: 2024).

I will address these points in detail throughout the analysis as relevant. Syria is a fragmented landscape, a patchwork of territories controlled by various civilian and resistance groups, as well as armed factions. In this context, warfare extends beyond the framework of the nation-state, targeting both external and internal enemies. At the same time, this type of conflict deliberately targets the civilian population, divesting individuals of their most fundamental rights—the right to life and the right to protection. Emphasizing “the generalized instrumentalization of human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and populations” (Mbembe, 14: 2003), Mbembe describes sovereignty as “the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die” (Ibid, 11).

Every ruling faction, including state forces, employs necropolitical mechanisms against the Other as a means of securing its own survival. Michel Foucault's concept of the "archaic regime", based upon the motto "the right to take life or let live," appears to remain intensely operative in this region. Here, sovereign power persists in its most brutal form, and the sovereign still wields his sword (Foucault, 135; 1978). Within such a geography controlled by multi-sovereigns, the victims of the war become the absolute targets of necro-politics. Tareq's words summarize it: "[T]he strike that killed my family was Assad's. ... No matter who we turn to, they all want us dead. Even if the war is won by someone, they all have blood on their hands" (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). It is a politics shaped around the sovereign decision about whom to kill or let live.

The archaic juridico-legal code suggests that "sovereignty is exercised within the borders of a territory" while the protection of the prince and the territory is the primary objective rather than the enhancement and optimization of the population's social and political conditions (Foucault, 11: 2009). As such, it is the Syrian government forces who bombard Tareq's residence, killing his family members. The ultimate concern of the Assad regime is to preserve the sovereignty within the borders of territory in their domain rather than the population's welfare. In the same way, twenty-six people in Tareq's neighborhood earlier lose their lives as a result of an air strike the grim reminder of which are the skeletons of buildings standing as "the mountain of broken concrete and twisted iron sticking out of the walls" (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Such incidents demonstrate that people are indiscriminately killed even by the authorities that are substantially supposed to secure the citizens lives according to the Hobbesian social contract. At first glance, the state appears to have violated this contract; however, Giorgio Agamben asserts that the sovereign inherently retains the right to suspend or violate it within the very structure of the agreement. According to him, "Hobbes, after all, was perfectly aware ... that the state of nature ... could be understood as a principle internal to the State revealed in the moment in which the State is considered 'as if it were dissolved'" (Agamben, 27: 1998). Based on this argument, Agamben proposes that this creates a threshold between law and violence by generating "sovereign violence", which indicates "a

dialectical oscillation between the violence that posits law and the violence that preserves it” (Ibid, 41).

The crucial aspect to consider is that civilians, whether armed or unarmed, find themselves ensnared in the sovereign violence due to the fact that the sovereign is authorized to declare a state of exception within the legal framework and to suspend the enforceability of law (ibid, 17).⁵ It is worth noting that the sovereign, by virtue of his inherent right to decide and generate a state of exception, occupies a zone of indistinction through which he navigates between the realms of law and violence, internal and external, simultaneously. This situation creates a space for both the sovereign and temporary sovereigns where everything becomes possible. In that case, the state of exception refers to “a zone that is excluded from law and that ... [is grounded] on the idea of delimited, free and empty space’ understood as a ‘temporary and spatial sphere in which every law is suspended’” (ibid, 27). Another factor that grants the sovereign this freedom of action is that the suspension of law and the normal order simultaneously results in the suspension of the rights of individuals subject to the social contract. At this point, it is essential to address the blurring of the distinction between *zoē* and *bios*—two concepts that were clearly differentiated in Ancient Greece. When the rule is withdrawn from the normal order, the rights guaranteed in the realm of *bios* are suspended by virtue of the fact that the *bios* is degraded to the state of nature, to *zoe*/bare life. Yet, *zoe* is included through its exclusion from the juridical order and maintains its relation to the rule upon being caught in the sovereign ban. As Agamben puts it,

“The relation of exception is a relation of ban. He who has been banned is not, in fact, simply set outside the law and made indifferent to it but rather abandoned by it, that is, exposed and threatened on the threshold in which life and law, outside and inside, become indistinguishable”. (Agamben, 23: 1998)

Moreover, the person who is banished is left to the clemency of the sovereign who abandons him (ibid, 65). In other words, the sovereign is provided with the very

⁵ Although the citizens of this country are theoretically subject to a social contract with the Syrian government, the reality on the ground is far more fragmented. Various groups—whether through resistance movements or pro-government alliances—have carved out their own spheres of influence, effectively establishing parallel sovereignties within the nation. Each of these factions exerts sub-sovereign violence over the individuals within their respective domains, enforcing their own forms of rule and control. This issue will be further examined from multiple perspectives in the subsequent sections of the analysis.

conditions and authority necessary to enact the right to kill, extending his power to its ultimate expression..

As depicted in the novel, Syria is a territory fragmented into multiple zones of control, each governed by different sovereign entities. Moreover, it offers as a clear example of both the state of exception and the state of siege. It is none other than the Assad regime that has suspended the law, thereby producing both the state of exception and the ensuing chaos. “Since ‘there is no rule that is applicable to chaos’,” the rule applies in no longer applying (ibid, 19). In the state of exception, those caught within the sovereign ban find that the pre-existing order they once knew has been suspended. Stripped of all their rights, they are confined within a space where they exist in a paradoxical condition—excluded from the law while simultaneously being included through their exclusion. In real life, the whole world witnesses that

“For example, in late April the [Syrian] regime deprived the southern city of Dara’a of electricity, water, and medical services, and it restricted entry and exit for approximately 20 days while shelling mosques and other civilian targets. ... The UN reported that more than 5,000 civilians were killed during the year”. (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 1: 2011)

What happens in Syria in this example is one of the perfect reification of sovereign ban and sovereign violence in a state of exception; which illustrates how individuals are abandoned by the sovereign. From the civil liberties to inalienable rights such as right to life, right to suffrage, freedom of speech and religion, right to security and private property, the rights of people are violated as a result of suspension of law in the novel as well. People are killed not only by the air strikes but also by public executions and arbitrary shootings; their right to mobilization is limited due to check points controlled by different groups and the lacking security measures in many senses; they are deprived of their right to education since many institutions are destroyed because of the internal war waged among these groups including the Syrian government itself. People in Tareq’s neighborhood and Raqqa suffer also from limited access to resources and lack of financial income to afford the items when found (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018).

Agamben synthesizes the elements arising within the “juridically empty” space described above into a singular metaphor: camp. Camp, as a structure, surpasses its literal interpretation and transforms into a state of being, an abstract concept which

implies “a new juridicopolitical paradigm in which the norm becomes indistinguishable from the exception” (Agamben, 96: 1998) while it overreaches the spatiotemporal boundaries, offering a permanent suspension of normal order (Ibid, 28). While Tareq and his cousin, Musa, are talking about Naim Square in Raqqa, Musa draws attention to the gravity of the issue: “That’s where Daesh carries out a lot of its punishments. It’s not the only place. It’s horrible, but it is now our new normal. You can’t avoid it” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018 *Italics mine*). Executions, indiscriminate shelling, arbitrary arrests, illegal seizure of properties, dilapidated buildings in dusty streets, armed militia become the permanent realities of new order as the title of the novel suggested. In Agamben’s words, “The camp is merely the place in which the most absolute *conditio inhumana* that has ever existed on earth was realized” (95: 1998) People fled their war-torn country saying their permanent goodbyes to everything and everybody they leave behind, knowing that they are trapped in the zone of indistinction permanently. As for the inmates of the “camp” in question; that is, the refugees and internally displaced people, Agamben relates them to “a figure of archaic Roman law”, to *homo sacer* (the sacred man) who “is the one whom the people have judged on account of a crime. It is not permitted to sacrifice this man, yet he who kills him will not be condemned for homicide” (Agamben, 47: 1998). Achille Mbembe, elaborating on slave life as an example of bare life confined to a zone of indistinction, on the other hand, refers to a slave as “a perfect figure of a shadow” (22: 2003) who leads a similar life to *homo sacer* which, in many ways, is a form of death-in-life” (ibid, 21). Like Tareq and his relatives, numerous people are the new sacred man of modernity whether they stay in or leave their country. Their in-between position is assigned even when they are at home after the rule withdraws itself from the juridical order suspending law, which renders people vulnerable to any danger and uncertainties. Each epitomizes a “werewolf”*, who is judged as “already dead” regarding that he may be harmed with impunity while he occupies a liminal space located somewhere between the juridical and the religious⁶.

⁶ Rodolphe Jhering was the first to draw a parallel between *homo sacer* and the figure of *friedlos*, meaning “wolf-man” or “man without peace.” Like *homo sacer*, the wolf-man (*wargus*, werewolf) exists in a liminal space, occupying a hybrid existence between the forest and the city. Once banished from the city, he belongs neither fully to urban society nor entirely to the wilderness, existing in a state of permanent exclusion. As Agamben explains, “he is precisely neither man nor beast, and who dwells paradoxically within both while belonging to neither” (Agamben 63,1998)

At every pace of history, there have been examples of sovereign exception/ban through which countless of people are confined to this zone of indistinction, paving way for the legitimization of violence and abandonment to the point of death. The lepers who were excluded from the healthy, people stricken with plague segregated and confined in controlled space, the demented and the idle in lazar houses emptied after leprosy, the slaves seen less than human, and the Jewish kept in concentration camps or killed, and now refugees are some among many. The fact that these people are stripped from all political rights and are in a position allowing them to be killed without committing homicide, somehow making each of them a living dead; “a pledge to his subjection to a power of death” (Agamben, 61: 1998). In order to describe life in Raqqa and the current system there governed through necro-power, Musa uses similar expressions for the inhabitants of the city: “It is dead. This is the city of the walking dead. Even in the areas that still have people in them—they’re not living, they’re just surviving” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018 *Italics mine*). What makes Musa’s words particularly striking is that they evoke the concept of bare life, entirely devoid of political agencies. In Ancient Greece, *bios*—which signifies the qualified life that distinguishes humans from other living beings—has been forcibly replaced by a mere struggle for survival in the face of constant threats. As Foucault proposes, “For millennia, man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for a political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question” (143: 1976). In this context, the suspension of law and the reduction of individuals to bare life become starkly evident through Tareq and his father’s encounters during their journey, as well as the oppressive order enforced within Raqqa.

During their journey to Raqqa, which Fayed deems inevitable to rescue his remaining children after tragically losing almost his entire family, Tareq and his father go through moments filled with trepidation and pass by inconceivable and horrifying scenes. Until they get Raqqa, they pass through several check points controlled by diverse groups like rebellions, Daesh, or pro-government militia known as Shabiha. Those check points, indeed, provide a complex structure of power relations to scrutinize. First and foremost, since there is no centralized sovereign

authority, the members of the groups controlling these checkpoints operate as proxy sovereigns, wielding absolute and unquestionable power. They take the advantage of the “juridically empty space” to the utmost, without accounting for their free, delimited atrocities and abuses. When Fayed and his two children are stopped by Shabiha soldiers in one of the check points, Fayed is threatened to be arrested on the account of that his name is on a made-up list. These group members, who offer bribery as the only means of escaping arrest and the “excruciating torture of incarceration” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018), derive their power from the sovereign authority they share as stakeholders in the vacuum created by the state of exception. The moment Tareq sees the Shabiha soldiers, he recalls the harrowing incident of a university student who was abducted, raped, and murdered by them. What makes this event even more unsettling is the response given by one of the perpetrators when asked why : “Because I could. I was given the power and I took it” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Fayed and many others like him understand that in these lands, anything—even death—can befall them, and that their fate rests entirely at the mercy of sub-sovereigns like at the check points. In relation to this, Agamben puts forward that:

“In all these cases, an apparently innocuous space... actually delimits a space in which the normal order is de facto suspended and in which whether or not atrocities are committed depends not on law but on the civility and ethical sense of the police who temporarily act as sovereign”. (Agamben, 99: 1998)

In the state of exception resulting from the suspension of law, members of the society turn into the figure of homo sacer who may be harmed in any sense, may be even killed without committing any kind of crime. That is, law applies in no longer applying for people reduced to bare life. There is no longer a judicial system through which they can claim any rights, nor a legal framework that ensures their safety as citizens. At the end, every kind of atrocities faced by people stay unpunished.

After having given all their money as a bribe at the previous checkpoint, Fayed and his children now find themselves gripped by an overwhelming sense of uncertainty and fear as they approach Daesh-controlled territory—a domain they had long heard about but never directly encountered. Daesh is an armed fundamentalist organization which constructs his own non-juridical normal order, setting his own rules in the city of Raqqa, “the de facto capital of Daesh” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). This group is constituted by members delusional and brainwashed, which is the worst

scenario when combined with the state of exception and the state of siege. Their atrocities they carry out have no limits sending shiver down people's spine. They not only confiscate the material properties of individuals but also infringe upon their freedom of speech and movement while they manage their bodies and minds. Destiny, the narrator of the novel describes Daesh as "a group of thugs who latched onto a religion in order to spread their darkness" (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). The governing system of Daesh is a mixture of fear, abuse, seizure, control and surveillance. Musa tells about the Daesh training camps for children where the radical group is indoctrinating their political ideology established upon misinterpretation of Islam, and teaches how to fight and use weapons. Tareq terrifies when he hears about the brainwashed kid who executes his own mother on account of not conforming the rules of Daesh (ibid). A crucial point that must be emphasized here is that Daesh's system does not align with Foucault's concept of biopolitics as a mechanism designed to enhance the well-being of the population. Its only biopolitical aspect lies in the fact that it integrates human beings into politics solely as biological entities. Furthermore, Daesh primarily operates within a necropolitical and archaic sovereign framework, where power is exercised through the control of death rather than the management of life. Examining training camps further illustrates this dynamic. While these camps employ disciplinary mechanisms that fall within the realm of biopolitics, they do so not to cultivate a productive population but to impose the group's ideological and behavioral norms. The organization has established its own set of rules and standards, and its primary objective is to mold the children into members who conform entirely to these prescribed norms. Each of those training camps functions like a prison that Foucault describes as "a machine for altering minds" and creating docile individuals (Foucault, 125: 1977). However, the two distinct from each other in that prisons in biopolitical system enable the rehabilitation of the individual, producing him as a subject, as "a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power" (ibid, 194). The kids in the training camps, on the other hand, become pure instruments of war politics; in other words, a means to secure the field of domain and power without being assigned any value to their subjectivity. The fact that they, on the one hand, pretend to be the representative of sovereign considering their actions and, on the other hand, stand for martyrs at the

same time confines them also into a liminal space like the victims suffer from their persecution.

In addition to the training camps, the traces of disciplinary mechanisms are everywhere in the city. The prevailing atmosphere in the city resembles the plague quarantine of the late seventeenth century, another historical example of a state of exception. It is the same disciplinary structure of quarantine that “enabled the state (the disciplinary power) to permeate into the private space of life through surveillance, control and enclosure; creating an atmosphere of immobilization and frozen space” (Foucault, 195-196: 1977). Accordingly, Musa expresses his feelings about being trapped in this gradually darkening city while welcoming his uncle and cousins: “I feel like we’re cut off from the whole world, and now a piece of it has returned. At least for a little while” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Moreover, freedom of movement is nearly nonexistent, whether within the city itself or across urban boundaries. The pervasive surveillance imposed on residents is just as fear-inducing and restrictive as the heavily controlled intercity checkpoints. Musa’s words reveal the sense of unease stemming from the ceaseless surveillance outside their house: “I just feel like I have more freedom inside than I do out here. Everyone’s watching us now” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). The panoptic controlling mechanism manifests itself at every inch of the city. Daesh charges a group of young boys known as the Hisbah to carry out the organizations’ rules and punishments, at the same time making them patrol in Raqqa as the eye of the sovereign. When Musa and Tareq go to a store to buy hair dye for her mother, the storekeeper warns Musa about the watchdogs, who jokes on the censored cover of the hair dye: “[B]e careful when making these jokes. You don’t know who is an informant these days. ... I have young children coming in here asking me questions. Daesh pays them to be their moles. We weren’t free to talk under the regime and we’re not free to talk now” (Abaw, n.pag.: 2018). What the old storekeeper tells is significant for two reasons; firstly, the everyday life is under ceaseless surveillance, making people distrustful as they feel watched continuously.

“Hence the major effect of the Panopticon [puts forth Michel Foucault in his book]: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. ... the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so”. (Foucault, 201: 1977).

In Foucault's disciplinary society, the individual internalizes societal norms through institutional structures, effectively becoming their own enforcer. However, in Raqqa—a living example of the camp where the law is suspended under a state of exception—the individual instead internalizes order through fear. Rather than discipline functioning through self-regulation in positive sense, governance in this space relies on the omnipresent threat of sovereign violence.

Secondly, even those who do not approve of the system become too terrified to resist, as they exist in a space where fear dominates, and the sovereign wields absolute power over life and death. Within such an environment, individuals experience what Zygmunt Bauman terms “social nakedness”—a condition in which they are fully exposed to any form of violence or intervention, deprived of protections that could shield them from sovereign authority. This state of vulnerability, in turn, leads to unquestioning submission and unconditional acceptance of imposed rule. A powerful example of this dynamic is Tareq's experience in Naim Square, where public executions take place. As loudspeakers announce preparations for yet another execution, Musa and Tareq are forcibly marched toward the execution site at gunpoint. In this moment, Tareq becomes convinced that he and his cousin are about to be executed, despite having done nothing to warrant such punishment. The most striking aspect of this scene is that even in the absence of any “rule violation,” Tareq accepts the prospect of his own death without resistance or even questioning why. Though Tareq soothes himself and tries to be strong in the face of approaching death, telling by himself “Don't show fear and hold your head high” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018), he still knows, “It was a different type of fear than from bombs and air strikes” (ibid, n.pag.). Yet, it is, one way or another, “the randomness of death and its fatality” all around (Foucault, 142: 1976). Each inhabitant in this region is consigned to the imminent risk of death, that is why they are at the point of an absolute submission to sovereign; however, as he later realizes, the sole reason they were taken to the square was that Daesh wanted them to watch the execution.

Tareq sees Naim Square for the first time when they enter Raqqa, where the severed heads are impaled upon stakes - a gruesome spectacle of terror, without knowing that he will be forced to watch an execution in person. The public

executions conducted in this square and the prolonged display of corpses for the purpose of giving a warning message to the rest of the population, epitomize necropolitics in its most explicit form. Daesh's method of carrying out capital punishments closely parallels what Michel Foucault describes as the pre-modern punitive system in the West, wherein the sovereign's authority is inscribed upon the culprit's body through its destruction. Michel Foucault states, "In the old system, the body of the condemned man became the king's property, on which the sovereign left his mark and brought down the effects of his power" (Foucault, 109: 1977). As Daesh maintains the archaic sovereign modality of power, corporal punishment as a public spectacle and the destruction of the culprit's body becomes the constituent element of Daesh's punitive system. The death penalties are moreover executed in a ceremonial way, revealing the purpose of the executions, and the ideology of the organization. Tareq and Musa are forcibly compelled to watch the execution of a young boy that is conducted in front of a large crowd consisting in his parents as well. The tirade recited throughout the execution, including phrases that seep into Tareq's ears, like "Insulting divinity ... Insulting the caliphate," implies the rhetorical assertion of power and the justification for sovereign violence, hiding behind the pretext of representing the divine (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Simultaneously, the brutal acts inflicted upon the body not only instill fear among the spectators, reinforcing collective subjugation, but they also solidify the perception of the substituting sovereign's absolute and unchecked authority. That is to say, the line between violence and sovereign blurs when the sovereign employs violence in the extremist sense as a way of preserving the new order and the sovereign's continuity. For this very purpose, sovereign does not abstain from exercising necro-power to eliminate the risky factors in the face of his existence.

As Mbembe, who elaborates on the concepts of race and the Other, states, "The perception of the existence of the Other as an attempt on my life, as a mortal threat or absolute danger whose biophysical elimination would strengthen my potential to life and security— ..." (Mbembe, 18: 2003). Since Daesh grounds its ideology on a religious bases, the radical group paints the city's church symbolically from white to black "like their flag, and now it is used as a brainwashing preaching center for Daesh" (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). What happens there is actually not only a

physical elimination of the Other, but also an ideological one, demonstrating that the right of freedom of belief is also desperately violated via oppressive governing mechanisms. It is for the same reason that the boy indoctrinated in the training camp executes his mother; and that a student Musa knew is also executed after “[h]e joined a group of citizen journalists, exposing the horrors of our lives for the world to see [and] He was caught. ... [The Hisbah] stabbed him in the heart, shot him and cut his head off. Over and over, it played” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Even though freedom of speech is one of the alienable rights, not only is he deprived of the chance for a trial to defend himself regarding his right to speak, he is, on top of it, killed in the end. This act of punishment, designed to instill fear, ensures that governing in the state of exception and siege enables those who are in charge with a complete control over public discourse as it applies to many other issues. Moreover, the execution of those aforementioned illustrates how sovereign power fuses law and violence within its body, erasing the boundary between judicial punishment and arbitrary slaughter.

As an expected result of the state of siege, the armed group stakes a claim on almost everything that belongs to civilians, ranging from their properties to their bodies. In such a turmoil of war in which lawlessness and impunity come to pass the new normal, people and everything they have unconditionally become the property of the sovereign. Houses belonging to displaced Syrians were systematically seized under fabricated charges of treason. As Musa explains, “I mean, when other families have left, they’ve spray-painted on the houses, claiming the Syrians who lived in them were American spies. So the homes become a free-for-all. ... Really, it’s their way of stealing the best property. And if the family comes back . . .” and finishes his words by sliding his finger across his throat, implying their inevitable death (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). This expropriation process consequently leaves former owners dispossessed and in permanent exile. By all means, Daesh’s seizure is not limited to the houses or money but extends to the capture of girls as wives to the fighters of the organization, imposing an additional layer of oppression for women⁷. In response, some families took drastic measures to prevent their daughters from becoming

⁷ The seizure of or claim on bodies of women has always been a matter of fact in war-torn territories where the chaos and lawlessness prevail just as in countries like Afghanistan, Nigeria, Bosnia. In Syria, the fact that women are treated as a property or as a sexual object is not limited only with Raqqa; it is irrepressibly common both within and outside the country.

captives. "Musa's neighbors sent their two older daughters, Shams and Asil, with Fayed. Their parents were afraid that Daesh would try to marry the attractive sisters to fighters. To save them, they said goodbye" (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Such a definitive intervention exemplifies the absolute stripping away of female autonomy under Daesh's rule, where marriage is not a matter of personal choice but a tool of political and military consolidation. Even though it is conducted in a different way, the bodies of young men also treated as an instrument of politics in that they are considered as potential fighters for the group. Due to such a threat, Musa's father wants him to leave with his uncle and cousins despite he will be marked as traitor.

Fleeing Syria, though often imagined as a path to safety and hope, is itself a perilous endeavor because of the superimposed restrictions by different groups in addition to Daesh. Journey to the border, rather than offering freedom, becomes another site of violence for many. During their escape, Tareq and others pass by a mortar shell, which the driver explains the fate of the charred structure when Asil asks who was in: "People who were trying to go to the border. ... Passengers like you, with a driver like me, and a talisman like this. ... Most of them are dead. ... They feared a death at home; instead, they died searching for life" (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). In this moment, the paradox of necropolitics is fully realized: those who flee their homes in search of life often find death instead. The state of exception that began in Syria's civil war did not end at the city limits but extended into the very routes that promised salvation. Still, Tareq and his family have been lucky in that "[t]hey left mere weeks before Daesh closed off the city, after which the only way to leave would have been through smugglers", which is another fatal challenge considering that the city is transforms into a total frozen space cut off from the rest of the world (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018).

All in all, the Syrian civil war transforms Syria in general into a space where legal frameworks ceases to operate, leaving behind a void filled by an authority that rules through unchecked violence, surveillance, and suppression. This transformation into a space of totalitarian control aligns with Achille Mbembe's concept of necropolitics very well, where sovereign power determines the very conditions of life and death. However, the story of a storekeeper, Rami whom Tareq meets in Istanbul, unfolds that this cycle of violence is not new; rather, it is embedded in Syria's history

of state-led repression as well. “Most of the men in [Rami’s] family were murdered in the Hama massacre more than thirty years ago. He only survived because his mother smuggled him out. She was raped by Hafez al-Assad’s men and left to die” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). This illustrates that the zone of indistinction through sovereign exception might be easily created by the sovereign given that he innately has the right to decide the exception, abandoning his subjects in a state of bare life divested from all political rights; even when the state as unified entity does not dissolve yet. Nevertheless, the multipolarity and the intervention of international actors in the conflict pull the region in such a chaotic system of governance that Syria turns into a camp-like free space where everything is possible for the sovereign as the law is in suspension. However, for the individuals in the state of exception, the camp-like political structure confines its inhabitants into a position deprived of political status and claim for human rights. What Hannah Arendt asserts about the concentration camps aligns with the case in camp-like Syria: “There are no parallels to the life in the concentration camps. Its horror can never be fully embraced by the imagination for the very reason that it stands outside of life and death.” (Arendt, 444: 1966). Moreover, Giorgio Agamben states, “Just as the law, in the sovereign exception, applies to the exceptional case in no longer applying and in withdrawing from it, so homo sacer [in this scenario, Syrian people] belongs to God in the form of unsacrificeability and is included in the community in the form of being able to be killed” (Agamben, 52: 1998). However, as much as victims inside Syria stand for an epitome of the figure of homo sacer, those passing beyond the borders are equally homo sacers in the sense that they maintain a position degraded to a state of being less than a human.

4.3. BEING A HOMO SACER BEYOND THE BORDERS OF SYRIA

Tareq and his family may have successfully escaped Syria, but this does not mean their nightmare comes to an end. Their dehumanized existence persists; it merely takes another form. Destiny stresses upon the significant impact of borders that divide the world of people: “*The invisible lines in your world hold so much power. ... whether you live or die can depend on which side you stand on. The trajectory of your life is conditional*” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). These words shed light on two critical points. First, being within the borders of Syria means that “your chances of survival outweigh a premature demise [of those living beyond the Syrian border]” (Ibid, n.pag.). In other words, despite sharing the same sky, the existence of borders and the dynamics within them profoundly shape people's relationship with life and death. Secondly, borders also influence how states formulate policies and attitudes towards individuals. It is important on which side an individual stands in that it defines the terms s/he is subject to within the borders of a given state. However, it makes no difference for refugees like Tareq and his family. Even though they hope to find peace and security outside Syria, unfortunately their position as homo sacer continues even after they leave their war-torn countries. In either case, they are treated through the mechanisms of necropolitics or within the framework of state of exception; even in places where biopolitics is exercised and the normal order is preserved, by being confined to a zone of indistinction between life and death, interiority and exteriority.

Emma Haddad defines the condition of refugees, who fall outside the state-citizen-territory hierarchy, as an anomaly within the international states system. According to her,

Until the problem is solved she [the refugee] will be an individual operating internationally, without direct ties to one particular state. She is no longer territorially based, as the states system dictates she should be; rather the

refugee finds herself in the 'no man's land' of the international landscape.
(Haddad, 60: 2008)

The breakdown of the ordering suggested by Haddad starts in Syria for Tareq and his family and the situation endures throughout their struggle as refugees. Deprived of a proper citizenship and state protection, they are trapped in the “no man’s land” without belonging to anywhere but the limbo. Similarly, Agamben considers that “[b]y breaking the continuity between man and citizen, *nativity* and *nationality*, they put the originary fiction of modern sovereignty in crisis” (Agamben, 77: 1998). From that perspective, he believes it becomes difficult to position refugees into the regular political system. Stripped of all the political rights and the state representation, Tareq and others leave their country as homo sacers already denied citizenship. They have been condemned to bare life, rendered socially naked and vulnerable to external interference and threats. Since the condition of refugees parallels with the slave condition that Mbembe scrutinizes in his article, it is possible to say that both result from “a triple loss: loss of a ‘home,’ loss of rights over his or her body, and loss of political status” (Mbembe, 21: 2003). The characters who flee Syria in the novel, either literally or metaphorically lose their home or the sense of belonging after losing the ontologically secure environment and the routinized relationships with the significant others as a result of conflict ongoing in their country. In the same way, every person without exception loses sovereignty over his/her body, upon which several atrocities are imposed, even to the point of death. The last but not the least is the deprivation of political status. Indeed, Hannah Arendt does not distinguish refugees from the stateless people in that both of the group are denied membership to a state, losing their political agency and its associated rights (296: 1986). The statelessness, in this respect, forces some displaced people to feel themselves as “permanent refugee[s]”, just like the Syrian-Palestinian man, Khalil does in the novel (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Emphasizing on the permanency of the state of exception for the displaced, which is supposed to be temporary normally, Destiny comments that “They likely will never have a true home again. Doomed never to be a part of their new world and forever ripped from their old” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Lacking a home, autonomy and the rights, they are captured in the sovereign ban, fighting against the distress of the uncertainties.

While it is the state of exception that generates people reduced to bare life, the permanency of the state of exception on a global level today, on the other hand, is the consequence of security discourses. Although Michel Foucault explains the modern mode of governance primarily through the concept of power, he places equal emphasis on the notion of security. Because security today becomes the primary concern of world politics, determining the trajectory of state policies. The September 11 attacks marked a critical turning point in shaping global political discourse through the lens of security. These attacks are important for three reasons: Firstly, they have provided the ground for the U.S. and the European states' necropolitical interventionism in the Middle East as a payback. Secondly, it has revealed the permeability of national borders and, in turn, impelled the nation states to resort the implementation of increasingly rigid border policies and heightened security apparatuses. Lastly and most importantly, they not only signaled the onset of a permanent state of exception on a global scale but also transgressed its spatial boundaries, effectively transforming the entire world into a camp-like space where anything becomes possible and justifiable. Given its inherent association with risk and precaution, the concept of security readily enables the sovereign power to decide on or even generate the state of exception. As such, the United States' call for 'war on terror' serves as a paradigmatic example of this dynamic. As illustrated in the earlier discussion on Syria, a declaration of state of exception enables the sovereign power - U.S. and several other Western states in this case- to act outside the normal juridical order, thereby producing "juridically empty space"; a zone in which acts of violence can be carried out without legal accountability. In this sense, the political interventions of Western states in the Middle East can be explained in this context. Judith Butler draws attention to the fact that the U.S. distinguishes the violence of September 11 attacks conducted by the Other from the one exercised by itself to prevent recurrence of such attacks, for the sake of justifying its political interventions (Butler, 4: 2006). This distinction reveals how sovereign power legitimizes its own violence by invoking a state of exception, wherein, as inscribed in every legal rule, lies an implicit exemption that allows for its transgression, such as the suspension of the prohibition on homicide when exercised as sovereign violence (Agamben, 19: 1998).

It must be noted that states frequently deploy necro-power against refugees in the novel, whether through overt acts of exclusion and violence or through more insidious, bureaucratic mechanisms of abandonment. In both cases, the invocation of “security” functions as rationale that reconfigures the refugee as a threat, thereby legitimizing their exposure to certain atrocities and death. This logic of control and containment constitutes what Diken refers to as the production of an “interiority, which only ‘lines of flight’ can ‘break through’” (Diken, 85: 2004). Thanks to such an interiority, says Destiny,

As desperate Syrians fled their homes and stepped over those artificial lines in search of light, they watched as others walked into the darkness, continuing to fuel the flames of disorder. Like in other war-torn countries, foreign elements destroyed their homes and their homeland even further. (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018)

That passage above underscores not only the desperation of those seeking refuge but also the extent to which disorder is externally manufactured and sustained. The Syrian conflict, as it unfolds in the novel, is not reducible to internal factionalism or civil strife. Rather, it is exacerbated—if not orchestrated—by international forces. Musa, speaking to Tareq, reveals the bitter irony at the heart of this crisis: many of the Daesh fighters occupying and devastating Syrian cities are not Syrians at all, but rather foreigners who come from countries like France, Saudi Arabia, the United States, Libya, and Britain (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). This unsettling detail reorients the locus of sovereignty, showing that the necropolitical mechanisms imposed on Syrian land are often activated not by the supposed internal forces, but by actors embedded in broader networks of global power. Furthermore, the response to the refugee crisis, that was produced as a direct consequence of these political and military interventions, does not fundamentally differ from the modes of governance enacted within the conflict zones themselves. Rather than assuming responsibility for the violent consequences of their geopolitical and military interventions, Western states reproduce the same justification, predicated on security, order, and self-defense, in order to legitimize the exclusion and distancing of the refugees those very acts have displaced. In this recursive logic, the refugee becomes both the product of sovereign violence and its pretext, positioned perpetually outside the moral and legal

community, whose suffering is depoliticized and whose presence is framed as a threat rather than a claim.

The Permanent Goodbyes reveals that, in administering contemporary refugee regime, states often operate through a bifurcated strategy of governance. Within their territorial boundaries, they carry out biopolitical mechanisms aimed at the regulation, optimization, and securitization of life, what Foucault famously defined as the modern state's shift from the right to kill to the policy to make live. According to this model, governments prioritize the effective operation of legal systems to manage populations through control over bodies, aiming to enhance collective welfare and maximize what Ancient Greek philosophy refers to as “qualified life.” This means that through biopolitical mechanisms, the state emphasizes not the repressive or negative functions of power, but rather its optimizing, generative, and subjectifying dimensions. Within this framework, when a threat or risk arises that endangers the continuation of “qualified life,” the legal and disciplinary apparatuses are put to work in order to protect citizens and the structures they are incorporated in. However, when such a threat emerges outside the bounds of this political and legal structure, this life-enhancing impulse abruptly halts at the borders. Those who remain outside, particularly displaced people, are cast into the extra-legal terrain, where the state’s biopolitical imperative gives way to necropolitical calculation.⁸ While the inner circle of citizenship remains protected by the legal order, those positioned outside of it are systematically excluded. In one respect, the state constructs an outer circle beyond the reach of juridical order, relegating refugees to a condition of legal abandonment. This dynamic reflects Agamben’s notion of “inclusive exclusion”, whereby individuals are incorporated into the sphere of sovereign control precisely by being excluded from its protections (Agamben, 12: 1998). Consequently, refugees are not merely neglected; they are actively exposed to death through policies of abandonment, deterrence, and containment. Their lives are no longer managed as politically significant, but rather rendered disposable, governed by regimes of exclusion, fear, and uncertainty.

⁸ Undoubtedly, even when the sovereign exercises a biopolitical form of governance, he always retains the right to decide over life and death, as well as the power to declare a state of exception, even when it concerns his own citizens; all for the sake of preserving the integrity of the structure, not the authority of sovereign alone.

Turkey becomes the first stop in Tareq and his family's journey toward hope. Although they have managed to escape the immediate horrors of war, a different kind of struggle begins for them, which is shaped by the absence of legal status and the lack of state protection. From the very moment they reach the border, they are subjected to intense surveillance. "They could see Turkish armored vehicles on patrol looking for Syrians trying to cross the border illegally" (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). The condition of strict surveillance intensifies at every border they arrive, gradually becoming an inevitable and oppressive aspect of their entire journey. It is revealed in the novel that, as a buffer state financially supported by the West, Turkey faces an overwhelming number of refugees. Nevertheless, its border security measures are enforced with comparatively greater tolerance than those of many European countries. During a discussion over Turkey and Europe, Tareq voices a fragile hope in the promise of the latter which he idealizes in his mind as a bastion of human rights and asylum protections. Yet Musa, grounding his ideas in a realistic perspective, dismantles this illusion: "[Europeans] don't want us either. At least the Turks let us in. Many European countries are closing their borders. And using batons to bang our people out. For God's sake, Hungary's building a fence!" (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Musa's words testify to the intensifying fortress demeanour of Europe where humanitarian discourse is increasingly supplanted by the language of exclusion and otherization. A significant factor underlying this tendency has been the series of bombings that struck both Turkey and several European countries during the years of Tareq's displacement, an era marked by heightened security concerns that has redefined migration policies (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). That is to say, a global state of exception has come to dominate the world order. All across Europe and the United States, there is a prevailing fear that individuals disguised as refugees might infiltrate national borders and carry out attacks that threaten public safety. Within this framework of suspicion, every refugee comes to be perceived as a potential terrorist. (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). One of the most striking and explicit statements on this matter in history came from Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orbán: "All terrorists are migrants" (Bauman, 23: 2016). Such rhetoric significantly intensified in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, when discourses of security merged with fear of the

“Other,” unprecedentedly culminating with the exacerbating refugee flows. Eventually it results in

a radical desire for security, a shoring-up of the borders against what is perceived as alien; a heightened surveillance of Arab peoples and anyone who looks vaguely Arab in the dominant racial imaginary ... The result is that an amorphous racism abounds, rationalized by the claim of ‘self-defense’” (Butler, 39:2006).

For this reason, as displayed throughout the novel, Newman aptly notes that while the burden of the growing refugee crisis is disproportionately shouldered by developing countries, European states have remained largely reluctant to provide asylum to those who reach their borders. Despite their rhetorical commitments to human rights, their practical responses often reflect a politics of deterrence rather than protection (Newman, 7: 2003). While security concerns are often cited as the primary justification, a range of other factors—including economic anxieties, competition over limited resources, and fear of the Other—contribute significantly to the exclusion and repulsion of refugees. These intersecting rationales reveal that the issue is not solely one of national safety, but of deeper structural and sociopolitical resistances to accommodating the displaced.

Security concerns, of course, should not be understood solely in terms of territorial or border protection. In a biopolitical framework, the primary aim of security is to discipline and nullify all forms of deviation through specific strategies and instruments of security apparatuses. Özmakas explicates the relationship between the biopolitical system of governance and the refugee crisis through the lens of the knowledge-power nexus. According to him, biopolitics, as a mode of regulating populations through preventive and strategic interventions, encompasses areas such as population density, birth rates, housing, resource distribution, including the management of migration. From this perspective, the refugee crisis can be understood as a challenge of regulatory technologies operated through knowledge. The absence of reliable information renders the refugee an unknowable figure, and thus, a source of fear rooted in uncertainty (Özmakas, 125: 2018). Tareq believes they will be granted asylum, even citizenship by the European countries with better opportunities, as, according to him, “they care about human rights—they have laws about it”, unaware of the circumspection of Europeans against refugees (Abawi,

n.pag.: 2018). To be able to preclude the entrance of the refugees, those states think up and enact varying security apparatuses, especially on their borderlines. These mechanisms are the ones operated from above and around the hosting or transit states. They try to barricade their borders erecting walls, building barbed wire fences or high-tech electric border fences. Hungary has been one of the pioneers of those striving to render its borders impenetrable, which is touched upon also in the novel (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Even in transit countries where the asylum seekers also does not want to stay, they are treated as if they are stricken by a contagious deadly disease, and are kept out of reach via exclusion, a sign of “fear of touching” of the Western states (Sennett, 228: 1994). When Tareq and his friends get to the Macedonian border after Greece, the government has closed the borders due to security reasons, conducting strict surveillance measurements to detect illegal entry of refugees in their territory (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). It is known that Greece has been working on an innovative project of installing a floating barrier in the Aegean Sea as an emergency measure in order to prevent the refugee boats to arrive in their islands (BBC : 2020). Emek Uçarer’s statement explains the paradox very well indeed: It has come to be a sharp “shift from the protection of asylum seekers to protection from them” (qtd. in Newman, 7: 2003).

One of the most significant reasons behind both governmental and public backlash against refugees is rooted in economic concerns. It is extremely feared that the refugees may derange the internal economical dynamic of the states. The social services of states such as health insurance, education etc are the dynamics that should be calculated and arranged according to the statistical data, which is a challenging matter in the face of the great number of refugees. Oliver Bakewell suggests that “They may be seen as adding to the existing problems, increasing the welfare burden on a state that is struggling to support its own population” (Bakewell, 128: 2014). Tareq and Musa, unable to obtain work permits as refugees in Turkey which already struggles with high unemployment, believe that Europe might offer greater opportunities for them. Indeed, similar conditions persist across some other countries in Europe as well, reflecting a broader issue rather than one limited to a single national context. Refugees are either confined into the camps which are outside the cities, or made to live in ghettos separated from the local people so that the refugees

could be prevented from overwhelming the labor market by getting potential jobs of the locals. In this respect, James Milner draws attention to the irony that by making refugees live in designated camps, “many states ... have denied refugees a number of the rights enumerated in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of refugees, such as freedom of movement and the right to seek wage-earning employment” (155: 2014). On the other hand, from the perspective of the locals, they are worried about their economical stability and status, reacting with resentment, worry and in some cases even with violence. In this regard, Bauman discusses over a recently emerging class; the ‘precariat’: “people afraid of losing their cherished enviable achievements, possessions and social standing” (15: 2016). The root of this kind of reactions lays in the potential instrumentalization of refugees as cheap labor both by the employees and the governments themselves. Bussiness interests, as Bauman highlights, look forward to taking advantage of refugees whose cheap labor and professions promise profit-making in their bussiness (Bauman, 10: 2016). It manifests itself in the example of UK collaborating with a French company in recruiting refugees with a payment much less than the minimum wage that a British citizen is supposed to earn, that is British government makes an exception within exception (Diken, 87: 2010). The characters’ experiences in İstanbul also reveals a similar story of exploitation of refugee people. They are often paid far less than the local workers; or not paid at all. Tareq experiences this firsthand, being denied payment twice and realizes that they “are exploited here” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Musa sums up this reality, saying, “Every day is another story of people being swindled and taken advantage of”(Ibid, n.pag.). In Lesvos, the second stop for Tareq and Susan,also economic concerns dominate local sentiment, this time not due to competition for jobs or resources, but because the ongoing refugee flow threatens the island’s tourism-dependent economy, by having a highly negative impact on most of the cities on the island. While some inmates of the island empathize with the suffering of the refugees, others express resentment, viewing the refugee influx as a direct disruption to the local economy (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Undoubtedly, these responses stem primarily from the biopolitical governance strategies adopted by host countries, which prioritize the welfare and security of their own citizens. Biopolitics is constituted by security, stability in economy, effective allocation of resources, impelling discipline and

fortified health of population. The sovereign seeks to eliminate any form of risk or threat that might jeopardize these biopolitical priorities. At the same time, the sovereign strategically exploits external factors for maximum benefit, capitalizing on situations that serve its interests. As such, the governments of host countries are taking advantage of refugees; for instance, the ticket prices are risen from seven to twenty-five Euros in Macedonia when refugees are transiting (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018).

When Tareq interprets the exclusionary and exploitative approaches they face throughout their journey as expressions of “hate,” Hassem, a Syrian helper grown up in London gently says: “It’s not hate as much as it is fear” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). As Foucault puts forward, at the core of the security lays the idea of “maximizing the positive elements . . . and of minimizing what is risky and inconvenient” (Foucault, 19: 2009). Host countries struggle to determine how to incorporate such large numbers of refugees into their societies with minimal risk and maximum benefit, often finding themselves caught between humanitarian obligations and political or economic self-preservation. As a result, they either refuse to grant asylum altogether or implement selective application processes through which only a limited number of individuals are admitted. Moreover, Western states often strongly believes that refugees could not conform to the cultural norms and disciplinary structures they have meticulously established within their societies. The Slovakian example lays bare the depth of such cultural anxieties harbored by some host nations. Reflecting a belief that Muslims could never truly integrate or “feel at home,” the Slovakian government declared that it would accept only Christian Syrian refugees, and even then, on condition of accepting people no more than two hundred (Baele, n.pag., 2016). Similar sentiments of anxiety are shared by the citizens of Turkey which take in millions of refugees. Those refugees “completely altering their populations” does not always get “a generous welcome” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018) from Turkish locals since the country is already a crowded one, full of millions “struggling to survive” (Ibid n.pag.).

Today, refugees who are frequently associated with the image of unpredictable danger, have come to occupy the place of what Foucault once termed the “suspect crowd,” a label he used in reference to the marginalized groups of the sixteenth century, including the vagabonds, the sick, and the discharged soldiers

(Foucault, 47: 1988). This dynamic can, in many ways, be interpreted as the fear of the Other. Just as refugees find themselves engulfed in uncertainty, fear, and disorientation, so too do the citizens of host countries experience a parallel sense of apprehension and anxiety, feeling overwhelmed by the unknowns that the crisis bears. In Anthony Giddens's terms, what both refugees and host communities experience can be described as a state of "ontological insecurity." As Jennifer Mitzen elaborates, this condition constitutes "an incapacitating state of not knowing which dangers to confront and which to ignore. ... Armed with ontological security, the individual will know how to act and therefore how to be herself" (Mitzen, 2006, p. 345). As much as the new land is an unknown territory for the refugees, their presence is also a matter full of potentials equally unknown for the inhabitants of the new land. They are afraid of the fact that the refugees may destroy the way of life and the fabric of society they have constructed so far. The citizens of Dover who have demanded from the government to put a limit in accepting refugees for this very reason. Certainly, there are individuals who aim to understand the refugee experience and offer their support; however, the prevailing attitude remains overwhelmingly negative. At this juncture, it is possible to observe two contrasting dispositions, one drawn from the narrative of the novel and the other from real-life events, highlighting the duality of public responses toward displaced people. When Tareq gets Moria, "The the graffiti on the barricades [there] lifted his spirits a bit. NO BORDERS, NO NATIONS SOLIDARITY WITH MIGRANTS NO ONE IS ILLEGAL" (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). With similar intention to raise awareness, two graffiti artists draws the infamous image of Alan Kurdi, the four-year-old kid whose lifeless body washed ashore. However, the picture was defaced with a motto, telling "Borders save lives". Indeed, the bomb attacks conducted after 2015 and the representations of refugees as potential terrorists on media intensified the fear more than ever, leading to an atmosphere of "moral panic" Bauman's words (9: 2016).⁹ Not being able to

⁹ The origins of the concept of moral panic trace back to an incident in 1964 in Clacton, England, where a clash between two youth groups caused local unrest. The resulting damage was disproportionately sensationalized in the media, and the youth involved were labeled as "folk devils"; figures portrayed as symbolic threats to social order and communal stability. Noticing the discrepancy between the actual event and how it was portrayed in the media, Stanley Cohen conceptualized such incidents to be called as "moral panics" in his dissertation in 1972. Scrutinizing this idea, Eric Goode defines moral panic as a fear directed toward the Other/the abnormal who is perceived as threat to the culture, lifestyle, and core values of society due to allegedly harmful actions. In the concept of moral

understand why people hate or fear from refugees in the beginning of his journey, Tareq “no longer blamed them for being afraid” because he understands why

Smiles were replaced with suspicion. Especially after various traumatizing incidents in Europe—including the coordinated terror attacks in Paris that killed more than one hundred people and the horrendous reports of sexual assaults on New Year’s Eve in various German cities. (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018)

Although the author essentially focuses on only the refugee women facing harassment in Turkey within the novel, in reality, numerous local women are also reported incidents of sexual assault perpetrated by refugee men. The high number of displaced individuals that is mostly beyond the capacity of effective monitoring, leads not only to instances of sexual harassment but also gives rise to various other forms of crime. Because of such biopolitically motivated concerns states often implement strict refugee and border policies, even though it means to contradict international principles regarding refugees like the right to seek asylum and the principle of non-refoulement as included in the 1951 Refugee Convention. In this way, the biopolitical mechanisms designed to sustain and enhance life within the borders are transformed into necropolitical apparatuses for those beyond them. What is life-sustaining for citizens becomes life-denying for the displaced.

Bauman points out that “Building and keeping order means making friends and enemies, first and foremost, however, it means purging ambivalence” (120: 1992). The ambivalence stated here is realized through “derealization of Other”, enabling the legitimization of the sovereign violence carried out via the sovereign ban. Butler explicates the derealization of the Other as follows :

The derealization of the ‘Other’ means that it is neither alive nor dead, but interminably spectral. ... [O]n the level of discourse, certain lives are not considered lives at all, they cannot be humanized, that they fit no dominant frame for the human, and that their dehumanization occurs first, ... then [it] gives rise to a physical violence” (Butler 33-34: 2006).

“The derealization of the Other” definitely corresponds to what Agamben asserts as “the form of unsacrificeability” and “the unpunishability of killing” the homo sacer

panic, fear is not the only emphasized element. Goode also highlights additional dimensions such as hostility toward the Other, a disproportionate reaction to the event, and exaggerated representations, all of which amplify the perceived threat.

(Agamben, 52: 1998). As such, the first condition for legitimizing any form of violence is dehumanization; that is, the stripping of the individual from all forms of political subjectivity and reducing them to mere biological existence, or in other words, to *zoe* or *bare life*. Throughout history, this has been the prevailing method of legitimizing sovereign violence. Before the Nazi regime transported Jewish individuals to extermination camps, the first step was to denaturalize them, stripping them of their political recognition and confining them into the domain of *bare life*. Similarly, enslaved individuals and Indigenous peoples were subjected to the same treatment in the past. Mbembe argues that “The savages are, as it were, ‘natural’ human beings who lack the specifically human character, the specifically human reality, ‘so that when European men massacred them they somehow were not aware that they had committed murder.’” (Mbembe, 24: 2003).

Although history bears witness to numerous instances of homicide legitimized through dehumanization, Karl Binding, a specialist of penal law has introduced a new dimension to the issue, by bringing the debate over the legality of euthanasia into the juridical scene, which marks a significant shift in how the value of life is politically and legally contested. Without doubt, it has had a pivotal impact on shaping today’s camp-like structures, where life is increasingly confined within an indefinite state of exception, rendering *homicide with impunity* possible. The individual sovereignty over one’s own body is the starting point for his argument:

Like the sovereign decision on the state of exception, the sovereignty of the living being over himself takes the form of a threshold of indiscernibility between exteriority and interiority, which the juridical order can therefore neither exclude nor include, neither forbid nor permit. (Agamben, 80:1998)

Yet far more significant is the fact that Binding’s derivation of “the necessity of authorizing ‘the annihilation of life unworthy of being lived’” has led to a juridical paradox that suggest the termination of such lives is neither explicitly permitted nor forbidden by the legal order, giving way to the creation of an ambiguous zone (Ibid, 80). This, in turn, has made it possible that lives deemed unworthy of being lived, and, most importantly, excluded from the law, can be eliminated without legal consequence. In relation to this, it naturally leads other crimes committed against these lives to go unpunished as well. Because individuals are confined to an ambivalent zone, their mode of existence becomes entirely spectral while they are

excluded from the law, yet paradoxically remain subject to it. Within the biopolitical framework, those who request euthanasia are soon followed by individuals deemed 'incurably lost' and 'incurable idiots' who pass as the politically irrelevant "sacred life" (Ibid 81). German history accordingly witnesses the mass extermination of mentally ill people through a program called *The Euthanasia Program for the Incurably ill*, which was counted as a necropolitical attempt preparing the ground for the Holocaust. The concept of "life devoid of value" has brought the issue to the most extreme point in the Reich that enabling him to generate the state of exception necessary for juridically free space to exercise necro power later in the extermination camps.

Although the annihilation of the demented without punishment during the Reich is a modern phenomenon in history, the fact that they had been pushed to the margins of society through exclusion and confinement dates back to the seventeenth century, unfamiliarity of which, Foucault thinks, is the juridical conscience that could inspire such practices" (38, 1988). Not naming it, still he puts his finger on a matter neglected then, which is conceptualized by Agamben today as the state of exception. Even then, the sovereign had created a liminal space outside the normal order, by generating the exception regarding the insane. The parallelism between the refugee experience and the mad's is striking in the sense that it proves the inherent power of the sovereign to decide the exception. For this reason, it is not surprising to find that, emerging as a Renaissance image, "Ship of Fools" carrying the mad at the time, nowadays corresponds to the "Dinghies of Refugees".¹⁰ The similarities are worth noting in that the passage they take and the ambivalent space they occupy are so identical that one cannot distinct them from each other when reading the following passage depicting the passengers of "Ship of Fools" if the subject is left anonymous:

The madman's voyage is at once a rigorous division and an absolute Passage. In one sense, it simply develops ... the madman's liminal position on the horizon of medieval concern-a position symbolized and made real at the same time by the madman's privilege of being confined within the city gates: his exclusion must enclose him; if he cannot and must not have another prison than the threshold itself, he is kept at the point of passage. He is put in the interior of the exterior, and inversely. ... He is a prisoner in the midst of what is the freest, the openest of

¹⁰ Ship of Fools (Stultifera Navis) is a literary composition referring to the satiric vessels. Even though there are several examples of this genre, *Das Narrenschiff* by Sebastian Brant goes beyond being a metaphor and finds its place in real life, as well.

routes: bound fast at the infinite crossroads. He is the Passenger par excellence: that is, the prisoner of the passage. And the land he will come to is unknown (Foucault, 11: 1988).

In considering the mass displacement of today's refugees and their quest for a place to belong, one cannot help but be struck by Foucault's evocative portrayal of the embarkation of the mad, a symbolic act of marginalization, where undesired bodies are cast adrift, rendered simultaneously visible and unplaceable, excluded while included through making them as prisoners of the passage. Just as the mentally ill once embodied the marginal figures of the medieval world, excluded yet not entirely absent, so too are today's asylum seekers trapped within a juridico-political gray area in the international state system. Displaced from their country of origin, they lose their home and protection of their state as a citizen, like the demented in the ships, they are kept either at the gates of foreign lands surrounded by the barriers or at camps outside the cities under strict control and surveillance. If not confined in the threshold, then they are captivated by the unending journey- another form of threshold-, not being able to belong anywhere. What is clear is that both the mad and the refugees are included precisely by being confined to the threshold where exclusion takes the form of inclusion. The same gray zone, embedded within the system, first enabled the exclusion and confinement of the mentally ill, and later paved the way for their systematic extermination during Hitler's regime in Germany. Today, it is the same logic that leads refugees to lose their state protection and fundamental rights and even their lives. Ultimately, the issue has become a matter of deciding whose life is considered worth living; and more critically, it reflects the sovereign's authority to determine which lives are deemed unworthy of existence.

As passengers without a definite destination, guided only by the faint promise of refuge ahead, Tareq and many others like Jamila, in pursuit of hope, embark their own *Ship of Fools*, setting adrift across the boundless expanse of the sea. Their journey, on the other hand, from the arrangements to the end, proves to be "a journey of death" (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Although people are aware of the fact that "The refugee trail is always lined with the haggard, bloody footsteps of those who came before", it is the state authorities who turn blind eye to the dangerous boat trips even though they are supposed to hinder them from travelling illegally (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Refugees are not seen as citizens-in-waiting but as excess populations—

deemed threats, burdens, or profits. Their bodies are at once a site of political anxiety and economic opportunity. Owing to the strict refugee policies, countless of people ask for help from the smugglers waiting in ambush to take advantage of their desperate conditions. Even for those who are refugees themselves experiencing the bitter face of war, the refugees signify a source of benefit. At the cost of separating families, smugglers exploit people despite their vulnerable economic conditions to maximize their own profits. Fayed, whose limited money could only secure passage for Tareq and Susan, makes the hard decision to send the children alone on the 'journey of death,' clinging to the hope that Europe will offer them better living conditions and opportunities. When Fayed tells they are told kids are free of charge, Fayed's smuggler hypocritically responds: "Maybe that is what some people promise, but that is usually the people who are either scamming you or don't care about your safety. They will cram too many people on a boat and won't care if they drown. *I care*" (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018 *Italics mine*). In fact, what he cares is only the money not the safety of these miserable people. People who are waiting to take the journey are "pushed into the boat, clearly in tears" as if they are just the cargo to deliver; additionally, the dinghies with worn-out motors are filled well beyond their capacity, carrying far more people than they are designed to carry while the driver of the boat is not a seaman but a computer technician (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018).

All the details heighten the possibility of the boats' capsizing, putting all the passengers at risk. On the other hand, the fake life vests are another form of being exposed to necro politics. Tareq understands that the boat trip they will take depends on nothing but luck, when he sees "[t]he warning label stated THIS IS NOT A LIFESAVING DEVICE—WILL NOT PREVENT DROWNING" while the Turkish store clerk "guaranteed the vest wouldn't let Tareq drown, a hollow warranty" (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Due to such kind of neglected details and pipe promises, countless of passengers attempting to cross the Aegean Sea perish in the waters, their bodies later retrieved by fishermen or washed ashore on the coasts of Turkey or Greece (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). When viewed through the lens of history, the Aegean Sea emerges not merely as a geographical boundary, but as a undulating graveyard marked by human suffering and displacement during the population exchange between Turkey and Greece in 1920s. During the journeys, countless lives were lost

at sea due to disease, starvation, and unsafe conditions, long before today's refugee boats ever crossed those same waters. The deaths of displaced Syrians and others seeking refuge today thus echo a tragic continuity in the Aegean's history, another example of a sovereign decision. Yet, Annis - a Greek helper in Lesbos- whose grandparents were also forcefully ripped from their home, thinks it is how she could make empathy with today's refugees (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018).

Tareq has been right with his worries; a couple among the passengers, like many others preceding them, dies and is washed away by the Aegean waters, leaving their baby orphaned, which is another toll of a passage marked by loss. The Aegean Sea becomes a necropolitical frontier, a liminal space where sovereign power exerts his right not to govern but to let die; even to kill. The way the Turkish coast guards handle the escape clearly reveals how refugees are perceived as the living dead, lives deemed as disposable. The coast guard targets the boat directly, attempting to puncture it. It is only when one of the passengers threatens to throw his baby into the sea; vowing to record and share it with the media, that the officers retreat. This moment starkly illustrates both the disregard for refugee lives and the extent to which people are reduced to political objects, forced to use the threat of tragedy as a last resort for survival. The most tragic fact is the child becomes a political tool, the threatened image of death leveraged against the state's concern for international reputation rather than human dignity. The lives aboard are not viewed as lives, and the concern is the preservation of national image in international political arena. The aim of the Turkish coast guards is "to prove to the international community that they were doing enough to prevent refugees from making it to European soil" (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018).

Since the journey is illegal, they travel under the constant threat of deportation if caught by the Turkish coast guard. Determined to cross the sea to reach Europe and aware of the fact that the illegal nature of their flight removes them from the circle of legal protection twice, one of the passengers tragically says that "We have no lives there [in Turkey]. What's the risk in dying if we are already dead?" (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). This statement epitomizes the internalization of sovereign abandonment and the realization that their lives, even when biologically intact, are no longer recognized as lives worth protecting. It is worth annotating an example

from history here to demonstrate how refugee lives are seen disposable, even when there is the means and the opportunity to save lives rather than letting them die. When an Indonesian vessel filled with 398 asylum seekers had sunk with only 45 survivors near Christmas Island in Australia in 2001, the state authorities “denied any responsibility, arguing that the sinking happened in Indonesia’s, rather than Australia’s, search and rescue zone” (Horsti and Neumann, n.pag.: 2017). Indeed, despite their defensive response, the government have been criticized on the ground of having been informed about the boat and its unsuitability, by a Senate committee (ibid, n.pag.). Tareq and the other passengers are not regarded as lives of value because, before threatened by posting the video, the coast guards have already hit the motor and the driver on the arm, afterwards leave abandoning them vulnerable to the risk of death. The engine stops, the driver is shot, the passengers are terrified in the openest sea, defenseless and fragile. In fact, as previously mentioned, the death of the couple and the subsequent loss of their orphaned infant is a direct consequence of this intervention. In the end, the political concern overrides the humanitarian help.

This is not an isolated case within the narrative where the concern for preserving one’s public image takes precedence over humanitarian responsibility. The restaurant owner in Istanbul, who withholds Tareq’s rightful payment similarly acts out of fear for negative publicity. Musa, threatening the owner of the restaurant with “filming everything right now and ... posting it on every website, including TripAdvisor,” manages to get money Tareq is supposed to be given (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). He is less motivated by legal or moral considerations than by an anxiety over potential reputational harm. Similarly, when Tareq and other asylum seekers arrived in Macedonian borders, the border finally reopens, “not out of mercy and kindness, but out of fear of bad press attention in Western Europe” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). It does clearly showcase that the politics of visibility replaces the politics of care. What troubles nation-states most is the absence of a coherent humanitarian rationale that legitimize the conditions to which they subject refugees. In one sense, this situation unravels the underlying paradox between state security and human security. Abawi implies in her novel that Turkey tacitly permits smugglers to operate openly in areas like Basmane, effectively allowing refugees to embark on perilous journeys that may end in death; so too do transit states conduct a similar abandonment by immobilizing

people at their thresholds, letting them perish at the margins of their borders. As illustrated through various incidents in the novel, border zones often present harsh and unforgiving conditions for refugees that, in many cases, become life-threatening, particularly for the sick, the elderly, and children, who are the most vulnerable to such extreme deprivations. To illustrate, Tareq, Susan and Jamila “were met by thousands of others trying to survive the frigid temperatures. There weren’t enough tents or food” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). For this very reason, that night die two children and one adult because of the harsh weather conditions (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Alexia witnesses several deaths due to the hard conditions during the journey such as starving, dehydration and cold weather, even after the passengers of rubber boats could manage to reach the Greek shores, just like “the little boy [who] was dead, frozen on the journey to freedom” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Even though it seems the deaths result from the hard conditions, it is rather due to the abandonment of people in the threshold, contributing to their deaths.

At times, their measures can be fatalistic but this time not indirectly. Tareq learns two men have electrocuted while trying to figure out a way to cross. Dr. Kassem explains: “They had climbed on a truck to see the surrounding area, ... when we heard the explosion. I saw one before the Red Cross doctors made it to him. ... His skin had peeled right off from the electricity” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Since people died on the threshold, the ambiguous point between interior and the exterior where law no longer applies to refugees as a mechanism of protection of the rights, then the homicide regarding the refugees stay unpunished. Their relation to the borders is subjected to a silent acceptance of uncertainty and subjugation. They are haunted by the “the fear of not being allowed through—and the wrong customs agent could cost you your freedom and possibly your life” (Abawi, n.pag: 2018). Moreover, “they were met at every border by military and police, some beating them, others yelling as if they were stray dogs chomping on a pie left on the windowsill” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). It is through dehumanization of refugees that people ranging from government officers and forces to the locals can commit to crime against humanity. They can rationalize those acts of violence- whether it be psychological, economical or physical- in their mind by not recognizing as a political entity. In this way, the characters in the novel are positioned as less than human, subjected to various forms

of inhumane treatment from the very moment they flee Syria. Deprived of the political agencies that once defined their identities, they also lose the sense of selfhood and dignity that such recognition confers.

Syria becomes a land of permanent goodbyes for Tareq and other refugees like him; nevertheless, it is not the land they offer their *permanent* goodbyes, rather it is their selves as a human being. The narrator reveals how “[a]t the will of a war, they went from being doctors, lawyers, storekeepers, students, mothers, fathers, daughters and sons to refugees, foreigners, freeloaders, terrorists, enemies. Labels that didn’t represent their true selves” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Each of them becomes a figure akin to the werewolf, exiled to the threshold between nature and civilization, neither fully part of the human order nor entirely outside it. In their search for a new and secure home, they are exposed to relentless forms of exploitation, sexual abuse, and other types of violence. They are compelled to endure conditions that render them less than human. A pregnant refugee woman in labor is forced to get in the boat by the smugglers who points a gun towards her. This unearths two critical points; firstly, the woman is an example of “the bare life, that is, the life of *homo sacer* (sacred man), *who may be killed and yet not sacrificed*”, that is, the smuggler knows that if he kills her, he will not be punished, that the case will be closed off (Agamben, 12: 1998). On the other hand, he does not respect *their* choices not to leave and jeopardize the life of both mother and the baby while disregarding their autonomy.

Perhaps among all those affected by war, it is women who suffer the most profound assaults on their dignity, as their bodies are all too often transformed into battlegrounds. Sometimes as genocidal attempts, sometimes as demonstration of symbolic power or just out of atrocity are women caught by sexual harassment whether it be on war zone or outside it as long as she is the victim of war. We are informed three specific women who are raped in the novel; two of them in Syria and the other in Turkey. One of them is Rami’s mother who was raped and let die by Hafez al-Assad, the second is a university student raped and killed in Syria. The third is Muzhgan, raped repeatedly by her smuggler in Turkey before he let her go (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). She is alone and has no one that could support her. She is left on her own to cope with this trauma and recover from her pain since the camp Moria has no sufficient facilities to support victims of such traumatic experiences. This pain and

suffer imprint on her soul and history as shame of humanity; or the sign lack of humanity.

After Tareq ve Musa leave Gaziantep for İstanbul, they have to live under inhumane conditions, stripped of dignity and basic recognition. This is most evident in their struggle to survive, as they are forced to sleep on the streets of Istanbul and rely on leftover food discarded by tourists and locals (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Tareq articulates the existential degradation that accompanies their exploitation in Istanbul when Tareq noticed an elderly Syrian woman, sitting on the cold, wet ground, her withered hands outstretched for help, yet her gaze was fixed not on passersby, but on a stray dog, offered food and water by two passersby—a quiet contrast to her own unnoticed suffering. Starting his words with “We live like dogs”, Tareq continues as “I take that back—dogs live better than we do” after witnessing that scene (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). They are rendered ghostlike, unnoticed; neither alive nor dead in the eyes of the community. When Tareq and Jamila get the makeshift camp next to Moria, which is called Afghan Hill, Tareq realizes another bitter fact:

Many of those there were not even allowed into Moria because they were not considered the right type of refugee, the ones they considered economic migrants, not asylum seekers. [People from varying] nationalities who were left in limbo. After risking their lives to make it here, they now faced deportation. In the hierarchy of who got their papers registered by European Union officials, Syrians were priority while others shimmied up, down and off the list in the eyes of EU law on any given day. (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018)

James Hathaway’s response to the 1951 Convention’s definition, regarding who is owed asylum, very well fits the case in Afghan Hill. He thinks “the requirement of persecution on a range of specific grounds is not arbitrary at all —[on contrary to the general idea]—but rather a way of picking out ‘the most deserving among the deserving’ of people on the move” (qtd. in Gibney, 50: 2014). Choosing one refugee over the other, in one sense, means that there is a decision on the value or non-value of life, and that not all lives are inherently worth to be saved. Another point to touch is the fact that those who are not seen appropriate might be sent back to their countries even though the non-refoulement principle of The Convention clearly states that

No Contracting State shall expel or return (“refouler”) a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a

particular social group or political opinion” (1951 Convention, Article 33/1: 1951).

Considering most of the asylum seekers there flee the war ongoing in their country, expelling or returning them to their lands counts as violation of the principle above, and devaluation of refugees as humans. The only condition under which asylum seekers are denied the protection of this principle is when there are “reasonable grounds for regarding as a danger to the security of the country in which he is, or who, having been convicted by a final judgment of a particularly serious crime, constitutes a danger to the community of that country” (Ibid, Article 33/2). As elaborated in the Convention, the possible deportations indicated in the passage from the novel unravel the arbitrary sovereign decision over life of the asylum seekers.

The systems that produce the refugees—whether political regimes, economic systems, or border policies—are less interested in saving lives than in managing deaths. The refugee condition is not simply one of displacement, but of persistent devaluation; that is, a permanent exile from political life, rendered visible only in death. Just before the journey while helping Susan wear the fake life vest,—aware of its functionlessness thanks to the warning written on it—“Tareq feared that he or Susan would be another tally mark added to that statistic. Another dead refugee that people would turn their backs on because it’s just too depressing to click on the link and read their story” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). Even though they become only the numbers on news and reports about the fatalities, their existence is still recognized only after their deaths. In Lesvos, the locals share a part of the local cemetery with the perished refugees, named as “Agnostos”—the cemetery of the unknown. Inhabitants of the island grieve for those who could not make it and “local charity holds a ceremony for every migrant. They bring flowers and give respect” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). It is sure thing Abawi aims to demonstrate that there are people recognizing refugees’ plight and share their sorrow. Nevertheless, it is ironic that their demand for restitution of dignity and respect is realized merely following their death, and that the dead gain recognition in the graveyards while the survivors still struggle to get back what is taken from them. Although the helpers have nearly nothing to do with granting legal protection or citizenship, and since it is political

and calls for legality, the only way for refugees to occupy a territorial and official space as part of the community, proves to be only through annihilation of their existence. From this aspect, it should not be wrong to name it as a conduct of necropolitics. The funerals and the cemetery for the unknowns in Lesvos remind the sensational shipwreck taking place near the Italian island of Lampedusa in 2013. As a result of the incident, nearly 368 people were recorded as dead while Matteo de Bellis argues that “these deaths could have been avoided. Italian authorities had stopped a naval vessel from assisting the people on the boat to prevent them from disembarking on Italian soil. Delays in the rescue contributed to the deaths of so many” (n.pag.: 2023). The ironic part of the case is not their abandonment of people and letting them die, rather it is that the Italian government has granted posthumous citizenship to dead refugees and memorialized. The act committed by Italian government is not only necropolitical but also hypocritical since the survivors just as in Lesvos are neither accepted nor granted citizenship, still passing illegals.

Throughout their journey, refugees are embraced not only by the fragile promise of hope but equally by the pervasive weight of uncertainty. When they arrived in their destinations, “[m]ost arrivals didn’t even know where they had landed”, or they cannot anticipate what they may encounter when they keep going (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). The only thing they care is to move on. Broadly speaking, the pursuit of survival becomes itself a form of incarceration for them in the absence of fundamental rights and protection. Tareq’s thoughts reveal their fear for the future, their traumas, and make a call for understanding and empathy, invite the fearful people to listen, without prejudice, to what they have been through :

Please don't be scared of us. We are more terrified of your reactions. We are broken people who are haunted by our past, our future and our dreams. We narrowly escaped death, the war, the rapes, the murders and the killers—we have family who didn't—please don't think those monsters represent us. We swam through our country's blood and corpses barely keeping our heads afloat to breathe, to survive and to live another day. We left our homes, we left our history. We left our loved ones without the time to mourn them. We brought our hearts, but they have been shattered into tiny pieces. We didn't come here to harm you, we've come to heal.(Abawi, n.pag.: 2018)

Eventually reaching Germany, Tareq realizes that it is a new phase in his life which hints both uncertainty and hope at the same time. What makes him uncertain is the

local people's suspicious gaze comparing to their empathy and understanding for earlier new comers whom they have welcome with smiling faces which have been replaced with suspicion and fear after the unpleasant incidents and attacks in Europe. Even if their response against refugees may not be as harsh as it is on the borders, he is unsure whether he could get out of the zone of indistinction and regain his political recognition and dignity one day. On the other hand, he is still hopeful because he knows there are helpers that may turn the world into a better place one day.



CONCLUSION

What makes *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* a compelling example of refugee literature lies in three significant narrative choices that Atia Abawi, whether consciously or intuitively employs. The first one is Abawi's decision to adopt a third-person narrator, an omniscient voice named *Destiny*. Her choice of an omnipotent narrator not only allows for narrative distance and impartiality, but also imbues the narrator with a symbolic and philosophical depth that transcends the boundaries of individual perspective. In this way, the narrator emerges neither as a victim nor as someone inflicting harm upon the victim, but rather maintains an objective distance from both sides. By naming the narrator "Destiny," Abawi imbues the narrative voice with an omnipotent and almost divine authority that sees across past, present, and future. This choice not only detaches the narrator from the constraints of the plot and the lived realities of the characters, but also elevates it beyond the confines of the fictional and the real. Destiny hovers in an exceptional liminal space between worlds, neither fully embedded in the story nor entirely outside it, allowing Abawi to subtly yet powerfully critique the political systems that generate displacement and reduce human beings to something less than human. At times, the boundary between the fictional realm and real-world events becomes so porous that the reader finds themselves drifting between the two, unable to fully distinguish where narrative ends and lived reality begins. This deliberate narrative ambiguity deepens the emotional impact of the novel, prompting the reader to confront the uncomfortable nearness of the refugee experience. Like many other examples of refugee literature, *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* succeeds in cultivating empathy and awareness in the reader, for Abawi's narrative choices elevate this effect strongly. Through her commitment to realism and an emotionally resonant portrayal of displacement, the novel compels readers to reflect on the fragility of their own rights and social positions, prompting a deeper, more personal engagement with the refugee experience.

The second notable narrative strategy lies in Abawi's use of setting. From the reader's perspective, the novel traverses multiple locations, exposing a range of geopolitical landscapes. However, from the character's point of view—especially Tareq's—the world is fundamentally divided into two settings: Syria, the homeland

now marked by war and destruction, and everything beyond it, which represents both exile and uncertainty. This dual spatiality highlights the stark contrast between belonging and alienation, familiarity and estrangement, and enables readers to grasp the psychological dislocation that accompanies physical displacement. Moreover, in the sections that focus on Syria, the novel opens a window into a world that remains largely unfamiliar, or even entirely unknown to many readers. It portrays the chaos and complex power dynamics of the region. In doing so, the novel reveals that the unrest and civil war in Syria are not solely the result of internal dynamics, but are also deeply shaped by the external interventions of other nation-states. Such interventions in Syria demonstrate how, under the guise of security discourses, national borders become increasingly permeable, allowing for foreign influence to override territorial sovereignty with relative ease. By portraying the lives of people while in Syria, the author allows the reader to recognize that the characters' reduction to *bare life* and their transformation into *homo sacer* figures begins not after displacement, but within the borders of their own country. Most importantly, the use of multiple settings reveals that the characters remain unrecognized wherever they go, helping the reader observe how their *homo sacer* status persists and attaches to them as a permanent condition. In a sense, this narrative structure compels the reader to confront a fundamental question: *Who is the refugee?* By revealing the indistinguishability between the refugee and *homo sacer*, Abawi leads us to recognize that the refugee is not simply a displaced person seeking shelter, but a figure systematically stripped of legal protection, political agency, and recognition which is an existence reduced to bare life within the global order.

Lastly, in constructing the plot, Abawi deliberately places representatives of both good and evil within every setting, emphasizing the ethical duality that surrounds displaced individuals. She portrays, on one side, those who exploit the war victims—individuals reduced to *bare life*—taking advantage of their vulnerability through psychological, economic, and physical violence without remorse. On the other side, however, she gives voice to those who recognize the suffering of the displaced, respond with empathy, and extend solidarity and care. Through this contrast, the novel highlights not only the brutality inflicted upon refugees but also the moral agency of individuals who choose compassion over indifference. Indeed,

Abawi deepens this ethical contrast by juxtaposing the story of Tareq who struggles to survive as a *homo sacer*, with that of Alexia, a volunteer who chooses to help. By placing these parallel narratives side by side, she underscores that even in a world where human lives are devalued and their deaths carry no legal consequence, hope persists. Through Alexia's compassion, Abawi reminds readers that amidst sovereign abandonment and systemic cruelty, acts of empathy and solidarity still have the power to affirm humanity. All in all, each of these three narrative choices enables Abawi to illuminate critical dimensions of the contemporary refugee crisis, offering nuanced insight into the ethical, political, and existential conditions faced by the displaced.

By employing Michel Foucault's concept of biopolitics, Achille Mbembe's theory of necropolitics, and Giorgio Agamben's notion of the state of exception, this study has demonstrated how the refugee characters in the novel are systematically reduced to bare life, and how sovereign powers exert necropolitical authority over them throughout their displacement. Firstly, as a direct consequence of the state of exception, Mbembe's concept of the "state of siege" has proven essential in understanding the structure produced by the ongoing civil war in Syria as depicted in the novel. The "state of siege" effectively captures the political landscape of a dissolved nation, fragmented into zones governed by multipolar and conflicting sovereign powers. It provides a framework to understand how power operates in such territories, seizing control not only over people's property and freedom of movement, but also over their thoughts, bodies, and very existence. Additionally, through the combined application of Michel Foucault's theory of biopolitics and Giorgio Agamben's notion of the state of exception, Mbembe's formulation of necropolitics offers a conceptual lens through which the acts of abandonment and death, which is central to both Abawi's fictional world and real-life refugee experiences, can be critically examined. Necropolitics fills the explanatory gap where biopolitics falls short, particularly in making sense of the violent exclusionary logic of contemporary nation-states' border regimes.

Michel Foucault's assertion that modern modes of governance are shaped through the paradigm of security has provided a valuable theoretical framework in

analyzing *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes*. His three modalities of power—sovereign, disciplinary, and biopolitical—have illuminated the novel’s multiple layers. In the context of Syria, the frequent occurrences of public executions indicate the persistence of archaic forms of sovereign power. These scenes reveal not only the raw brutality of sovereign violence but also the political and ideological logic behind such spectacles of punishment. Furthermore, Foucault’s concept of disciplinary power has proven instrumental in understanding the mechanisms of control employed both within Syria and across the national borders the characters traverse. Through surveillance practices, exclusionary measures, and prison-like infrastructures, the novel exposes the disciplinary structures adopted by various armed factions in Syria and by the governments of host and transit countries. These structures are not merely functional but ideologically driven, reflecting a logic of containment and governance grounded in fear and suspicion. In addition, the framework of biopolitics has particularly revealed why Tareq and other refugee characters are subjected to such exclusionary, and at times, necropolitical treatment. Foucault’s insights help explain how, under the guise of economic rationality and security discourses, host states justify their often dehumanizing and exploitative policies toward refugees. Biopolitics thus emerges as a crucial lens for understanding how the management of life becomes selective, where the lives of displaced persons are rendered disposable under policies that privilege national interests over human rights.

Giorgio Agamben’s concept of the *state of exception* has been helpful in understanding not only the ongoing chaos within Syria but also the broader global political atmosphere shaped by exceptional governance. By examining the legal and political mechanisms through which sovereign power claims the right to suspend the rule of law, Agamben offers a framework for interpreting how order collapses and chaos is normalized. Whether within the Syrian conflict zone or across the international system, the sovereign’s ability to declare a state of exception reveals how legal norms are suspended, allowing for the creation of a juridically empty space in which the protections once granted to citizens are stripped away. In this sense, the theory helps to illuminate how former citizens are reduced to *animal life*, a condition bereft of political agency and legal recognition. Moreover, Agamben’s

theorization enables a deeper understanding of how this transformation from political subject to *bare life* becomes the norm, rather than the exception. The displaced characters in *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes*, particularly Tareq, are subjected to sovereign abandonment not only after fleeing their homeland, but from the moment state order within Syria collapses. They are rendered stateless in the most profound sense, deprived of protection by the very nation that once claimed them. Agamben's insights have revealed how this state of exception is not limited by time or space, but instead follows the refugee across borders, reconfiguring their status as permanently excluded non-humans. Thus, Agamben's *state of exception* allows for a more nuanced reading of the novel's depiction of displacement. What begins as a temporary political crisis becomes a permanent condition of exclusion.

The narrative strategies employed by Atia Abawi, together with the theoretical frameworks provided by the key scholars I have drawn upon, have enabled to reach critical conclusions addressed in *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes*. As the novel underscores, the turmoil and civil unrest erupting and escalating in refugee-producing countries cannot be attributed solely to internal dynamics; rather, they are often intensified by the deliberate political and economic interventions of profit-driven powers, particularly in the West and the Arab world. These acts of interference render such states ethically accountable for the displacement they help generate, binding them to a moral responsibility they can no longer disavow. In this sense, James Souter, elaborating on the function of granting asylum, emphasizes on basically three functions, the first two of which he borrows from Matthew Price: "as a response to a fundamental humanitarian imperative"; "as an expression of moral condemnation of the persecutory or otherwise illegitimate actions of refugee-producing states"; and "as a reparation for past injustice ... potentially providing a means by which states can rectify the harm they caused to individuals by turning them into refugees" (326: 2013). Far from compensating for the consequences of their actions, those nation states slightly differ from persecutory states in terms of manner. The novel reveals that the very modes of governance and conduct that are expected to be condemned are, in fact, practiced by Western states themselves in their treatment of refugees. These states justify such practices under the guise of security discourse, which functions both as a pretext and a mask. The notion of

“security” is particularly powerful in this context, as it inherently involves elements of uncertainty and the perceived need for precaution in the face of potential threats.

In a strange way, sovereign powers dehumanize the refugees by defacing them and strikingly they give faces to terror and fear through them. Their existence is degraded to a non-human state, representing a concept or phenomenon rather than a person with recognition, which enables the sovereign to legitimize his violence and render their lives as disposable. Bauman argues that

Finally, the policy of ‘securitization’ helps to stifle in advance our—the bystanders’—pangs of conscience at the sight of its suffering targets; it leads to the ‘adiaphorization’ of the migrant issue (that is, exempting them and what is done to them from moral evaluation) (25: 2016).

Security discourses lead people to turn a blind eye to reality and prevent them from recognizing what is happening as an ethical issue. In fact, such actions are, at times, even defended as legitimate initiatives precisely because of this. In other words, “[t]hese deaths [and other act of violence], which ultimately become statistics, are met with indifference and are made invisible under the legal umbrella or border control that accepts it as is, without conducting any type of moral assessment” (Cloquell-Lozano and Novella-Garcia, 2: 2022).

What is most alarming is the growing number of bystanders who either to soothe their own moral discomfort or as a result of media-induced fear, choose silence and inaction. In relation to this, Bauman believes “Humanity is in crisis” (17: 2016). From the outset, Abawi draws the reader’s attention precisely to this crisis in her novel. By emphasizing the “lack of humanity,” Destiny functions as both a narrator and a prophetic voice, offering a subtle yet urgent warning to the reader. This emphasis comes at the very beginning of the novel, deliberately framing the narrative as one deeply concerned with the condition of humanity, more specifically, with its absence. In doing so, Destiny invites the reader to approach the unfolding events not just as a story of individuals in crisis, but as a reflection on the ethical failures of a global society. In a sense, the narrator’s aim is to make clear that the crisis at hand is not limited to a specific geography; it is a condition that implicates all of humanity. The suffering portrayed in the novel is not merely the plight of a

distant Other, but a reflection of a global moral collapse in which no one remains untouched or exempt.

Destiny conveys the message of a fragile new world order which is built upon precarious balances. It emphasizes that every human, regardless of geography or circumstance, is subject to a form of precarious life, and reminds the readers the unsettling reality that all individuals now belong to a global risk society. Though the world may appear divided by invisible borders, when it comes to risk, those boundaries dissolve revealing a single, shared world where no one is truly untouchable. It conveys the message that a global state of exception now governs life. At this point, the world takes the form of a camp in the metaphorical sense described by Agamben, which transcends temporal and spatial boundaries, where every individual holds the potential to become a *homo sacer*. In other words, Destiny's warning revolves around the fragile line upon which humanity now treads. In the risk society of reflexive modernity, it implies that citizenship—and with it, the rights and privileges it grants—can be revoked at any moment, revealing the precariousness that underlies even the most seemingly stable lives. Destiny underscores the possibility that the secure and routinized lives we strive to preserve can be, in an instant, relegated into bare life. Through this, it offers the idea that in the emerging global order, the condition of ultimate security and stability is no longer attainable. Bauman, in fact, argues that this is precisely why people do not want the refugees arriving in their countries. He believes that such exclusionary and neglecting responses towards the new comers “might relieve, at least for a time, the humiliation of our helplessness and our incapacity to resist the disabling precariousness of our own place in the world” (Bauman, 16: 2016).

Through the voice of Destiny who stands as a firsthand witness to the unfolding of human history, Abawi both warns the reader about what may come and offers guidance for them. Destiny urges readers to empathize with those reduced to *bare life* and to acknowledge their ethical responsibility toward them: “be that helper, do what you can to make that world a better place. Because when I meet you—and I *will*—there will be a reckoning. There *always* is” (Abawi, n.pag.: 2018). She calls on readers to move beyond the passive stance of the bystander and instead take

meaningful action that may help restore the lost sense of self and dignity of those people. Destiny insists that it is only through recognition, empathy, and engagement that these displaced lives can be rehumanized and their worth reaffirmed in a world that has rendered them invisible. Because one day, if they find themselves in the place of those whose lives have been rendered invisible and devoid of value—or if they wish never to fall into that position in the first place—and if they want the helpers to outnumber the evildoers that day, then they owe it first and foremost to themselves to take responsibility and act. As Destiny reminds us, the only way out of the crisis that defines our world today lies in solidarity: “it’s the power of compassion and love—the two elements that can save a world” (ibid, n.pag.). Abawi invites the reader for an inclusion of otherness of Other and post-national compassion, empathy and tolerance. Accordingly, displaced people should be granted a permanent legal protection rather than temporary asylum because, as Hannah Arendt denotes,

Man is a social animal and life is not easy for him when social ties are cut off. Moral standards are much easier kept in the texture of a society. Very few individuals have the strength to conserve their own integrity if their social, political, and legal status is completely confused. (Arendt, 116: 1994)

Mervyn Frost, emphasizing the importance of recognizing refugees and defending their rights to citizenship believes that it is significant first and foremost for our own self-recognition. In relation, he describes a global order within the framework of his *Constitutive Theory*. He names this world order as the *Global Civil Society*, which is constituted by individuals who, though subject to different sovereign state systems, are nonetheless interconnected and ethically bound to one another at a global level. This is a society which is essentially borderless, anarchist, unselective and non-interventionist. She basically argues that

Our own standing as citizens depends on our being recognized by other free people, by other citizens. If these others are suddenly denied citizenship in their own states ... then they can no longer give us the recognition we need for our own freedom. For this reason we have an interest in securing for them active and effective citizenship. ... Migrants ... ought to be seen not as supplicants deserving charity but as people whom we need to establish as citizens in democratic free states in order to secure our own freedom. Our own standing as free people depends on our receiving recognition from other who are similarly free. (128-129: 2003)

In conclusion, *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* delivers a powerful message in a time when human lives are increasingly devalued: it urges each of us to treat this moment as a call to recognize that “humanity is in crisis,” and to respond not with indifference, but with action. It is a call for defending each bare life’s “right to have rights”. Above all, the novel underscores how essential empathy, understanding, and inclusive dialogue are—not only for the well-being of displaced individuals, but for the future of our shared humanity.



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