

CAMP, DISPLACEMENT SOVEREIGN AND STATE OF EXCEPTION: AN AGAMBEN STUDY OF REFUGEES IN “EXIT WEST”

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ABSTRACT

Agamben (1998) through the figure of ‘refugee’ illustrates his construct on bare life, camp, state of exception, sovereignty. The narratives of the encamped refugees portray them as homines sacri as ‘zoe’ sans ‘bios’ living at the bare level of necessity. Refugees are subjected to modern day techniques of sovereignty including violence which Foucault (2007) dubbed as ‘governmentality’ are employed to control, dominate and subdue them. The refugees in “Exit West” (2017) can be seen as ‘biopolitical’ subjects that can be controlled and regulated as subpopulation in ‘state of exception outside the ambit of routine legal framework.

Keywords: Camp, Displacement, Sovereignty, State, Refugees.

INTRODUCTION

Geopolitical developments in modern human history have resulted in migrations, dislocation and subjectification of humans at an increasing pace and scale. These migrations reverberate with Agamben’s constructs like bare life, homo sacer, sovereignty and state of exception; and have gained popularity and clientage in modern day readers of human geography, social sciences and humanities. His politico-philosophical thoughts find full illustration in *Exit West* (2017) by Hamid, portraying developed states’ systematic resort to violent ‘governmentalities and harsher immigration policies while dealing with the problems of refugees. The fiction explores several inter-connecting themes including immigration, refugees, camps, migration and passages through ‘magical doors. The experiential accounts of the main protagonists evoke the traditional displaced persons’ narrative, moving from a point of displacement to point of settlement, exposing issues concerning global livings in camps state with bare life. Besides characterizing the contemporary political events, it challenges social practices, customs and rules through the experiential accounts of the characters of Nadia and Saeed. The story lays bare the operative systems within spaces causing bare life, state of exception and violence both in native and in modern democratic host states.

It is through the figure of the ‘refugee’ Agamben’s (1998) construct on bare life, camps and sovereignty find full illustration. It exposes more deeply the ‘fiction’ of national sovereignty and all associated legal and political categories such as ‘people’, ‘public’, ‘human rights’ and ‘citizen’. Agamben held that ‘the refugee’ can be characterized as the ‘model’ of his construct as being subjected to modern day techniques of (sovereignty) which Foucault (2007) dubbed it as ‘governmentality’. These systematized practices and procedures are employed to care, protect and finally dominate the individual subjects. Besides, Agamben argued that refugees can be viewed as ‘biopolitical’ subjects: liable to be controlled and

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regulated as population in 'state of exception' or camps, outside the functioning of routine legal framework. Consequently, it is particularly portrayed through the narratives of the displaced persons in the subject fiction, who are reduced to 'bare life': humans are characterized as animal sans political freedom or rights. Thus, we see the displaced persons living in the camps at the bare level of necessity and of means rather than that of ends.

The refugees living conditions of different camps clearly epitomizes the Agambenian concept of camp. According to Agamben (1998) camp is included in political network through its own exclusion. 'Whoever entered the camp moved in a zone of indistinction between outside and inside, exception and rule, licit and illicit, in which the very concepts of subjective right and juridical protection no longer made any sense' (Agamben 1998: 170). These extraordinary spatial arrangement function outside the usual juridical (and often territorial) order. It designates places wherein biological, political, private and public life cannot be set apart or distinguished from each other. The lack of infrastructure and social organization support in the camps reduces displaced persons to the status of bare life and puts them defenseless. They are deprived of the legal cover for the crimes committed against them; Saeed and Nadia cannot claim the money from the scammer. Besides, when they are chased and harassed by the Greek natives, Saeed and Nadia are not protected by the armed guards who are deputed to protect not the likes of Saeed and Nadia but, in fact, the doors leading to wealthier countries. In situation like these, the fiction exposit that only daring, adventurous and criminal minded people thrive, leaving conscientious and innocents like Saeed and Nadia at risks of danger.

In the 'zones of indistinction' only those 'zoes' will survive the ordeal who are daring, charged with sheer optimism, progressivism and devoid of apriori nostalgic baggage. Such displaced persons (like Nadia in the subject fiction) are seen, after decades struggle fathoming the uncongenial, violent and lawless stormy waters. The ability to change, adapt, and look ahead allows people to overcome the sorrow of moving through different chapters in their lives. The fiction clearly transpires the physical and mental ordeal of the displaced persons in the camp. To be displaced person means a lot of sacrifice as such people have to give up the emotional support and dependability of family. It is like being dead and to be born; this situation is nothing short of a prolonged state of trauma as uncertain future in an exchange for emotional care and protection.

Violence and displaced persons

Violence has close nexus with society, human nature and behaviour as they are either perpetrators or recipients of it. It is very dimensional and varied as human life and exists not only in the social fabric but also in the realm of metaphysics as wages of sin. It exists in socio-cultural and politico-religious realms with its functional utility, serving diverse psychological and structural needs in the social fabrics of society. Violence can assume any form as it could be political, economics, gender, physical or sexual. Galtung (1990) found the genesis of violence back to feudalism which is directly based on the privilege of *rex gratia dei* to have an *ultimo ratio regis*. With the dawn and development of democracy under the slogan of *vox populi, vox dei*, executions too are carried out in the name of 'the people, combined with the ideology of the nation-state with a theological construct of chosen people. Modern democratic states act as successors to God, inheriting and exercising the right to terminate life through legal executions; even some deem that these have the right to control the creation of life by formulating policies regarding abortion and birth control. Besides, violence as a matter of nurture and acquired behaviour is controlled and influenced by diverse socio-political and religio-economic exigencies. Hence every social fabric be it developed or underdeveloped holds an incredible potential for violence which finds articulation at cultural level and therefore validates even the unjustifiable acts. Galtung (1990) held that violence can erupt at any corner at the direct, structural and cultural violence triangle and oscillates freely between all the corners of triangle.

Nearly every page of the refugee's narratives in *Exit West*, (2017) reflects the tangible impact of violence on life during wartimes but also the quieter collateral damage that creeps in. However, violence becomes more evident and direct in the scenes of absolute violence wherein militants as predators are closing in on their city. The main protagonist Nadia's doctor cousin is was blown away in pieces. The drug dealer who is selling Nadia and Saeed the magic stuff (mushrooms) is beheaded, then "strung up by one ankle from an electricity pylon where [his body] swayed legs akimbo until the shoelaces his

executioners used instead of rope rotted and gave way". Saeed's mother was shot dead while she was looking for her lost earring in the car.

In these 'empty spaces' normal operation of law is suspended and only the will of sovereign reigns. The sovereign will is imposed through different means and choices (Foucault calls it different forms of governmentally) and violence is one of these. The zones of indistinction are reminiscent of state of Nature which subsists itself in the person of sovereign (Agamben 1998). He was influenced by thoughts of Benjamin (1921) on 'divine violence' which marks a radical revolutionary power shift, toppling the all former systems of juridical law/rule; it instead of institutionalizing a system of law rather abolishes all law. Agamben (1998) further held that sovereign embraced the legal capacity to place itself outside law with the justification of all sorts of violence, essential for restoring peace and normality. In light of these arguments the camps, therefore, become a permanent zone of indeterminacy rendering its inhabitants the status of neither living nor dead rather dwellers of an indeterminate space, in constant fear of violent deaths.

Exit West, (2017) portrays displaced persons as victim of violence in the first place from their native country wherefrom they were forced to flee to avoid persecution at the hands of competing sovereignty. They witnessed lynching, beheaded bodies, hanging decayed corpses, people playing soccer with severed human head and death distributing stray bullets. Even after having reached Mykonos, they were attacked by the natives and Nadia received injury at her arm. They felt them secure upon reaching nearby guards but to their surprise they were not interested in defending them but the 'doors' leading to the prosperous western nations. The fiction transpires that displaced persons are destined to face violence all around and mere change of physical border is meaningless. Militants (competing sovereignty) hailing from Saeed and Nadia's country entered and assaulted Vienna and this violent attack sent a wave of panic in camps, leaving its inhabitant in a fix whether to endure or flee. In fact, they were left with no choice as Homines Sacri either to undergo violence in the host country or to face persecution at the hands of militants in their native country. There was no turning back as no door in their former city was left undiscovered and those who intended returning, were destined to meet the brutal death. Displaced persons have no respite from violence even in the host states where they are attacked by violent native mob. The refugees are treated as total outcast and an affiliate of violent tribe, bent upon to destroy their social structure of the host nation. London media marginalizes the refugees and typifies refugee areas as "the worst of the black holes in the fabric of the nation" (*Exit West*, p.126).

Agamben, (1998) in similar veins shared his belief which was based on German nomos that whosoever destroys the proverbial peace of their social fabric, is, in fact, a beast, bandit and werewolf. Being dubbed as savages, they were stripped to mere bare life and were pushed into the zones of indeterminacy. The development of this rhetoric afforded sovereignty as means of moral justification of violence and all sort of cruelty. Agamben (1998) rightly observed that Germans sent Jews to concentration camps after shedding the latter form rationality and this process deprived from them the protection of law. Hence they were confined in zone of indistinction and state exception. Hamid (2017) accidentally plagiarized the ideas of Agamben (1998) who held that much of the world has turned as bandit as it is thronged by homines sacri. Hence, host governments, thriving at the popular sentiments of local population felt justified in launching major offensives against displaced person with the intent to reclaim Britain for Britain. Helicopters and surveillance drones lurked around the camps and on ground there were murders, rapes and assaults. Saeed and Nadia were not new to such violent scenes, "They were well cognizant of what the build-up to conflict felt like, and so the feeling that cast over London in those days was not new to them hence they faced it not with bravery, exactly, and not with panic either, not mostly, but instead with a resignation shot through with moments of tension" (*Exit West*, p 136). The immigrants like Homo Sacer were left defenseless and without the protection of life. In London, "Nativist raid that disabled machinery, destroyed dwelling units nearing completion and severely thrashed workers. "But mostly there was little to report, just the day-to-day goings-on"(Hamid, 2017, p 175).

The frequent display military muscle and the digital surveillance were actually reminders to the people of 'dark London' of the technological superiority of sovereign and the intention was to generate the frightening effect with help of the automata. it signified a persistent efficiency with an inhuman power, and

induced the fear that a small animal feels while facing a predator : of an altogether different order, like a rodent facing a snake. Nativists in London were supporting wholesale massacre and their frenzy was uncontrollable ready to slice through any layers of resistance. The refugees sensed an imminent violence and the attendant massacre with impunity. Saeed and Nadia felt themselves under the operation of brutal doctrine of state of exception and Homo Sacer: a voiceless animal. Nadia and Saeed, who had escaped from such violent situation already, were again pitched against it not knowing where next, they pondered in the confused frenzy whether they were better off after having crossed the doors or they have just changed the faces and buildings and the brute reality of their bare life remained all the same. Consequently, mere the change of geography ,culture and nation could not alter the fate of a homo sacer. Uncertainty out of the un-provoked violence always lurked in their minds and they knew they might be forced to move. Running away from dangerous situations is natural but Saeed and Nadia's routine life in camps is permanently fraught with dangers and running from it feels hopeless and unnecessarily wearing. After being manhandled by mob in London, just after the frightening riot, both examine each other's contusions and behave gently with each other and even without sexual contact, mere romantic gestures fulfilled their need to feel connected. The fiction suggests that violence can influence people's relationship among them and to places by placing importance on security and pragmatism rather than luxuries. The trauma Nadia and Saeed have lived through in their home country and host states fundamentally changes how their approach life as they prioritized safety of their chosen dwelling over its aesthetics. Hence they kept their luggage unpacked to respond timely to quickly changing situations. Nadia felt seeing someone familiar becomes more important to her and she resorted to sex with Saeed as physical proximity smoothened and mitigated her fear arising after physical assault.

Show of force by host nations reveals how violent stance against defenseless displaced persons triggers a loss of humanity and high moral stature. Power outage signifies significance of control over infrastructure that symbolizes civilization. "That night the electricity went out, cut off by the authorities, and Kensington and Chelsea descended into darkness. A sharp fear descended also, and the call to prayer they had often heard in the distance from the park was silenced. (Hamid, 2017, p139). Instead of resorting to public executions the host governments achieves similar effect by display of military machines and surveillance technologies. Hanafi and Long (2010) too held that refugees had political lives which lie at the junctures spanning across several sovereigns like host state, local political parties, international donors and NGOs. Nadia plainly equated the British government forces fighting against the displaced people to the militants. Here Hamid (2017) partakes the ideas of Agamben when the latter claims an innate nexus between the advent of human rights and the development of camps. In this sense, there is no sharp division between parliamentary democracies and authoritarian regimes , liberal constitutional states and dictatorial regimes (Agamben, 2000). Consequently, the comparison of situations by Nadia from the eyes of a refugee, implies the behavior of host governments is deteriorating to the level of a violent militant group; methods employed by the both led to the same end of terrorization.

Different forms of governmentalities employed in 'zone of indistinction' (camps) detaining displaced persons, can be categorized as the devolution of imperial power arrangement. The operative principle behind these is mere arbitrary justification on the part of its designer that 'everything is permitted'. Everything is permitted even it may be in contravention of humanitarian law and international conventions, ranging from wholesale elimination to the degradation of individuals (Owen,2009). It appears that displaced persons are faced with inhumanity during offensive operation and even the stoppage of the free kitchens before besieging the camp rendered them more vulnerable. Consequently, modern day sovereignty or the system of governmentality, instead of straight away killings, control their 'bare lives' through life supporting social ecology.

Sovereign and state of exception

Agamben (1998) outlines basis of sovereignty through a figure he fetched from ancient Roman Law: homo sacer. This is a person who can be killed one with impunity, as he is barred from the politico-legal community and reduced to the status of mere physical existence. 'Bare life' excludes human beings who have been denied full legal rights and status. "Bare life" of a human being (homo Sacer) is the object of

a sovereign decision and as a result he is unable to exercise legal claims or rights and is reduced to the status of mere 'biomass'.

Sovereignty is exercised not only by means of legal determinations of 'exception' and 'rules' but also through the remodeling of routine life of refugees. Sovereignty besides determining and control of physical borders and naturalization also acts as an implicit fear of radicalization, declaring displaced persons and ethnic refugees as ungovernable stuff. The electronic and print media of London disregards the refugees and characterizes refugee areas as "the worst of the black holes in the fabric of the nation" (*Exit West*, p.126). Agamben, (1998) in similar veins shared his belief which was based on German *nomos* that whosoever destroys the proverbial peace of their social fabric, is, in fact, a beast, bandit and werewolf. Consequently, natives are treating refugees as total aliens and associates of violent tribe, bent upon the destruction of their social fabric. In addition, the British government thriving at the popular sentiments felt justified in initiation of major offensives the displaced people with the intent to recover and retain Britain for Britain with ethnic and racial solidarity. Hence the issues of statelessness and displacement become vital element in theorizing control over "zoe" physical bodies and political lives (bios) of the *homines sacri*.

According to Agamben (2000), only 'sovereign' can decide when the law can be suspended because the sovereign is already the lawgiver, deciding the space in which the rule of law has validity. In other words, suspensions of the law, declarations of emergency or the establishment of asylum-seeker detention camps wherein suspension of various human rights are normal, are not rare or marginal phenomena. When Saeed was stopping refugees from looting the house she called Saeed an idiot as she thought he was putting himself in danger. (She knew it was a futile effort to invoke law which actually was not existing in such spaces. Nadia knew his interference in the pillaging was useless as his sense of morality in that situation was not to be taken seriously.

Displaced persons in the fiction *Exit West* (2017) suffer persecution not only at camps but also at their native places. The experiences of both of the protagonists in the novel, in the words of Burn (2016) refract the elements of "crisis" and "waiting" from the point of exodus to resettlement. Their experiences of 'crisis' subsume death, decay, destruction and violence (Holmes and Castanede 2016) whereas "waiting" comprises patronage at the part of host states, locals and humanitarianism organisation (Ramadan 2016). The protagonists in "Exit West" characterize the spaces of politico-legal disorder and socio-spatial exclusion through their experiential accounts of their exodus. The fiction portrays developed world as epicenter of this crisis, hence the host states came up with "expansive methods" of 'Sovereignty' such as heavily guarded 'doors' stringent physical border control, suspended political and human rights, unwarranted search and seizures, taxations without representation and forced labors etc. Besides, structuring and regulating of daily routine of displaced through bureaucratic measures which sovereignty employs as routine over time such incremental restraints on daily lives make ordinary existence listless and difficult.

Foucault (1991) and Dean (1999) held that the absence of conventional governance, alternate approaches of control or 'governmentalities' will emerge in the zone of indistinction /camp and these contrivances have thrived successfully in regulating camp residents' behavior. These governmentalities go a long way in ensuring the day-to-day functioning of the camps and contribute to the rise of councils to manage the routine behavior and regulate the rationing. We find its illustration in the fiction, "The activities of the council were mundane, making decisions on room disputes or claims of theft or unneighborly behavior, and also on relations with other house on the street. Deliberations were often slow and cumbersome, so these gathering were not particularly thrilling" (*Exit West*, 2017 p144-5).

Different types of sovereignty continue to controlling lives of people in camps even after their re-settlement. The lives of the subjects/residents subsume spatial methods of control in camps; in the words of Ramadan (2013) the lives of displaced persons are suspended into "permanent temporariness" through a complex of social, political, legal and economic justifications. Hence these temporal rhythms portray displaced persons or refugee lives as "exceptional" politico-legal persons (Anderson 2014). Even after the re-settlement refugees are usually subjected to new set of sovereignty whereby their futures are rendered subservient to the aspirations of host states without much resistance. Agamben (1998) held that in 'state of

exception' a person is so stripped of political status that he or she is reduced to "bare life" and is, therefore, vulnerable to state intervention without any recourse to prevent it.

Camp

Camp is not a new and modern-day phenomenon rather the trace of homo sacer dates back from Roman exiles through the condemned of the Middle Ages to the inmates of Nazi concentration camps and beyond. Agamben (1998) conceives of "bare life" as existing in the modern-day era too as he identifies its existence in refugees, displaced persons and asylum seekers. Here he means that the tradition of bare life is free from time and clime and 'homo sacer' is forever and everywhere. Agamben holds camp as "hidden paradigm of the political space of modernity" and expounded his construct of the concentration camp as "the hidden matrix of the politics in which we still live" (Agamben,1998, p123). For him camp instead of being a demarcated historical place or a defined 'spatial' entity, in fact, is a demarcation between Zoe and bios, i.e. bare life and political existence. It could be anywhere or any place that produces bare life. In his words, "the camp is the space that is opened when the state of exception begins to become the rule" (Agamben 168-9). He held that "It is materialization of the state of exception" (Agamben,1998 p175) whereby rule and exception, law and factum are inseparably united. He further thought it is sovereignty that first produces bare life and then subordinates and controls it, "The production of biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power" (Agamben 1998, p 6); and this judicial model advocated and propagated by him was actually proffered by Schmitt (1996) who considered sovereign with an ability to create a 'state of exception' and then suspends rights. Consequently, the binary association of 'zoe' and 'bios' plays a central role in above stated model. According to Agamben (1998) camp is, in fact, is a method of achieving the 'state of exception' which subsequently turns into a fine combination of law and factum and rule and exception. According to him camp did not strictly meant to him as an entity of antiquity but symbolized as the boundary between "bare life" and political existence. According to him it could be a space anywhere wherein "bare life" is intentionally produced and systematically shaped: "the camp is the space that is opened when the state of exception begins to become the rule" (Agamben,1998,p168-9).

The narratives of the refugees reveal that in camp settings (empty spaces) normal operation of law is suspended and only will of sovereign reigns. In the modern democratic states, the proverbial sovereign reigns supreme and is enforced through different means and choices (Foucault calls it different forms of governmentality) and violence is one of these. The native people of London were supporting widespread massacre and their fury went uncontrollable and it looked as if it would run over any layers of resistance to be come across. They identified a great holocaust was in the offing with impunity for the perpetrators and without any retribution for their killings. Saeed and Nadia sensed violence similar to the fury of militants in their native country. They felt themselves under the operation of brutal doctrine of bare life and felt as homosacer : a defenseless and voiceless animal. Being subject to the 'state of exception', Nadia and Saeed pondered in the confused fury whether they were better off after having migrated trough the magical doors or they have just swapped the faces and building structure and the brute fact of their 'bare life' remained intact and all the same?

These camps or 'zones of indistinction' are reminiscent of state of Nature which survives in person of sovereign (Agamben 1998).Warrender (1962) quoting Hobbes said that people in such situations live in fear of violent deaths. (Arendt 1951). The narratives of the refugees transpire that they were deprived of even the most basic needs and were driven to the level of the minimum. Hence in these spaces or zones of indistinction 'person' cannot be guaranteed human rights by virtue of merely his or her humanity.

The novel "Exit West" is based on the narratives of displaced persons, a very apt platform for readers to value and sense Agamben thesis on camps/state of exception. According to Agamben (1998) camp is the most perfect space ever created to realize and confirm the power of sovereign. In the fiction camp in the political systems of host nations are invariably founded on the principle of "exclusion". Displaced persons after having entered the camp, in fact, moved in the space of indistinction between outside and inside, rule and exception, licit and illicit. Within this zone of indistinction the displaced persons' conventional ideas of legal protection and subjective rights are rendered meaningless. The narratives of displaced will go a long way in understanding how abominable events of Guantanamo bay and Nazi concentration camps, occurred in the backdrop of present judicial imperative.

The camps depicted in the fiction partake the state of exception and operate only after the approval of the host governments. Since displaced persons are legally abandoned yet they are encompassed within the law. According to Pratt (2005) law and exclusion are closely linked as for the law to be exercised, someone as law enforcer has to be outside it. Hence for the excluded, it is by means of abandonment they remain in a bond with the sovereign. Notwithstanding, they are posing themselves to be out of it and its laws operate both within the host state by having their own rules and administrative set ups. Notwithstanding, the displaced people started to manage their affairs through the mechanism of council, “The activities of the council were mundane, making decisions on room disputes or claims of theft or unneighborly behavior, and also on relations with other house on the street. Deliberations were often slow and cumbersome, so these gathering were not particularly thrilling” (Hamid,2017 P:144-5). This situation clearly partakes the observation by Handman (2000) that refugees at one and the same time questioning and conforming to host states’ sovereignty.

Agamben description of camp as ‘spaces’ wherein biological, political, private and public life of the displaced persons become inseparable. The camps harboring them are an extraordinary ‘spatial arrangements; these are seen operating outside the standard juridical order wherein displaced persons are reduced to ‘bare life’ factually and figuratively. Even the forms of resistance to the different modes of sovereign power are characterization of the expressions of ‘bare life’. When Saeed, Nadia and other refugees in London are deprived of water, electricity and food supplies, such moves are in fact rewriting of sovereign power’s creation of ‘bare life’ on the persons of refugee’.

Agamben (1998) characterizes displaced persons’ camp as a zone of indistinction wherein they undergo violence without legal consequence for the perpetrators. The refugees in the fiction *Exit West* (2017) after having reached Mykonos, they were attacked and injured by the Greek natives. They felt them secure when they reached the nearby guards but to their surprise they were not were assigned to secure the refugees but the ‘doors’ leading to the prosperous nations. The territory of camp is designated as spaces beyond the ambit of routine juridical procedure. All those who are managing and detaining the displaced persons in these spaces can be taken as agents and instruments of sovereign power. Everything they are doing against the displaced persons is justifiable in the name of national security, territorial sovereignty and for the protection of resources and ensuring routine life of natives (Owens, 2009). Now question arises can sovereign act always in a responsible and non-capricious way as we have seen the suspension of law and attendant violence in contravention of international convention particularly in Guantanamo bay Cuba and Nazi concentration camps wherein people are rendered stateless and without any legal identity?

Agamben’s concepts of ‘homo sacer, bare life, camp and sovereignty find full expression in the fiction through the persons of Nadia and Saeed. It is through the image of refugee’ he has illustrated the construct of national sovereignty and all allied politico-legal concepts like public, masses, human rights and citizenship. The immigrants in the fiction, in consonance with political thoughts of Agamben on camp as the classic site of state of exception wherein the displaced persons s are victim of contemporary techniques of surveillance. This construct too is in consonance with Foucault idea of ‘governmentality’: the procedure and techniques drawn in for looking after, domination and control individual subjects. Despite the fact that displaced persons have been reduced to bare life as the protagonists felt it at the level of animal, “She thought her body looked like the body of an animal, a savage. Nadia wanted to take shower more than anything, more even than she wanted food. “Nervous and annoyed and dirty-looking Saeed. What she was doing, what she had just done, was for her not about frivolity, it was about the essential, about being human, living as a human being, reminding oneself of what one was, and so it mattered, and if necessary was worth a fight” (Hamid,2017, p 122).

According to Agamben (1998) refugees/displaced persons are absolute ‘biopolitical’ subjects who are regulated and controlled at the level of general public in a permanent ‘state of exception’ beyond the compass of usual legal framework. In these camps, they are reduced to the status of ‘bare life’ and characterized as animals sans political rights and freedom. Rosenberg (2011) observed that interactional patterns within the camp and social ecology outside native population are neither appropriate choices nor the best future course for refugee protection. Nevertheless, host governments usually argue that camps as practical necessity isolate displaced persons from native population to minimize conflict over fast

depleting resources. The *“Exit West”* (2017) through its protagonists is trying to voice this apprehension of confining people within camps; the situation within camps indicates a thoughtful concern about what is a camp and how it mirrors the host populations’ attitudes towards the victims of disasters and armed conflicts; and how that onerous responsibility of refugees are to be shared with other shareholders? The main characters Saeed and Nadia very appropriately highlighted the status of the displaced persons as a voiceless victim rather the recipients of assistance and intercession by philanthropist host governments. Here Agier (2002) and Malkki (2002) have rightly observed whether the different forms of control of sovereignty over bare life in states of exception can restrict the growth of new urban culture and cosmopolitanism based on multiple ethnicities?

Migration a means of escape?

The population of displaced persons, in fact, is victim of multiple causes within their home towns such as bloody armed-conflict, terrorism, persecution, human rights violations. Besides, others move in response to natural disasters and uneven economic development rather a shift from low to higher economic opportunities and safety zones (Arendt 1966; Malkki 1995). One of the displaced family in the fiction, is found admitting that their country was poor, they didn’t feel they had as much to lose (*Exit West*, 2017). Besides, one of the immigrants is quoted by the narrator, “To flee forever is beyond the capacity of most, at some point even a hunted animal will stop, exhausted, and await its fate, if only for a while” (*Exit West*, 2017 P:163). The fiction theorizes that people immigrate for avoiding violence, safety or just for finding an alike spirit. These fictitious magical doors act as a potential means of escape for oppressed and traumatized citizens, notwithstanding these doors also causing complexity to the issues of border management. The magic doors offering passage to new world symbolize a breakdown of borders and afford liberty, optimism, and fear that is associated with uncertainty. Even for people from developed world these doors represent the likelihood of escape from lives that otherwise have turned unbearable. Because of the ease of travel through them the doors symbolize the termination of the borders and territorial statehood. Their displacement is interpreted and treated subjectively as it is presumed to be temporary by host nations. Hence these nations are offering aid and establish space for the displaced. The protagonists in the fiction are found struggling near half a century rather than their drag in exile being brief sojourn. At one point the narrator within the fiction comments, “We are all migrants through time (*Exit West*, 2017 P:209).

In consonance with the thoughts of Gregory (2004), Giorgio Agamben’s (1998) theories are highly relevant in discussing and interpreting the nexuses between law and territory and the usefulness and inadequacies of employing the constructs of ‘bare life’, ‘sovereign power’ and ‘state of exception’ in spaces of conflict as well as in refugee camps (Diken and Lausten 2005; Fluri 2012; Hanafi and Long 2010; Minca 2007; Ramadan 2009). The fiction clearly transpires that in the displaced person’s camps in different parts of the world new forms of control were employed by the sovereigns. In *Exit West* (2017) it is the style and use of surveillance tools that determines the form of particular government. The militants uphold control by nurturing fear of disobedience in natives, and therefore, surveillance adopts the system of informants and casual search points. However, in London, Nadia and Saeed come across drones mostly frightening as some of them dropped bombs and looked like robots. Hence the drones epitomize a government observing and judging without an iota of humanity and highlighting the vicious treatment of displaced in the zone of indistinction. The constant surveillance either under the competing militant regime and even in the camps under democratic regimes eroded personal privacy, forming an atmosphere of terror and paranoia. Surveillance technologies characteristically weakens people’s rights as privacy renders people self-respect. The metaphorical bathroom situation in the fiction, establishes the invasive nature of competing sovereignty (the militant’s regime), rendering even the most private act subject to scrutiny. Similar surveillance mechanism keeps the displaced family under awe in Dubai who is taken over by the false sense of security, resourcefulness and luxury of the city instead of their own safety and self-preservation. The displaced persons are under the delusion of false sense of security and they are determined to have their share in the resources and comforts of host nations.

CONCLUSION

Political demarcation of globe and nationhood based on geography and ethnicity have become ineffective inhibitive factors as people, mostly driven by survival instincts, are migrating since time immemorial. The fiction questions the concept of nationhood and belonging to somewhere as country of origin may play an insignificant role in a fast globalizing world, rendering nativeness as a matter of relativeness. The fiction in an anticipatory tone proffering the perspective of one world wherein that people can operate without nationhood based on territoriality and ethnicity. Hence we see people freely crossing geographical borders through magical doors and camps are seen as melting pot of people hailing different regions and ethnicities (Wee,2010). Delanty (2009) too characterized refugees as transnational communities which are formed out of local and global relations, giving possibility of creation of a global community emerging from trauma, collective memories and the experience of exile. Thorough an insight into the functioning of camps, displaced persons and state of exception, one may find new ways of political belonging, the limits and possibilities of political community in the future. The camp symbolizing great global migration may be viewed iconoclastically with the sense of adoption, accommodation and necessity. The sovereign exercise of 'divine violence' is always in contravention of international conventions as it is observed by Arendt (1951) particularly in the cases of Guantanamo and Nazi concentration camps.

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