JJMLL

Dialogic Failure of Displaced Lifeworld: An Analysis of *Exit West by* Mohsin Hamid

Urooj Waheed *
Phd Scholar at Air University

Munawar Iqbal Ahmed
Department of Humanities, Air University, Pakistan

Abstract

This article investigates the encroachment of the economic and administrative systems in the immigrant lifeworld in *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid. Habermas's concept of lifeworld colonization has been customized by taking into account panoptic surveillance as an accomplice of financial and political pressures which cause strains in interpersonal communication. The accumulative effect of systematic pressure and surveillance on the verbal and nonverbal interpersonal interaction of the characters under surveillance is studied through a dialogic lens to answer the following questions: How is the dialogic nature of personal relations in the novel *Exit West* jeopardized by the continuous process of migration? How does the status of being migrant make the lifeworld vulnerable to a systemic watch of the host communities? How does displacement intensify interpersonal conflicts? The article employs dialogic textual reading to study the play of system-backed ideologies and the alleged role of the given dominant narrative at the level of interpersonal communication.

Keywords: Immigrants, Lifeworld, Double-Voicing, Surveillance.

Introduction

The concept of Habermasian Lifeworld refers to the realm of everyday life and social interactions where individuals engage in communicative action and mutual understanding. It encompasses the shared norms, values, beliefs, and cultural practices that shape social reality and provide the basis for social integration (Habermas 1987). In a lifeworld, social actors interact and- despite all the differences- manage to reach an understanding if not always a consensus. Social actors use their stock of cultural knowledge to make social relations through appropriate communicative patterns. Once these patterns are lost, or deliberately or strategically ignored, the social actors face a crisis in the lifeworld (Habermas 1987). In Habermas' proposition, the crisis occurs when the financial and political pressures enter the lifeworld. In the immigrant community, the crisis arising from the loss of communicative patterns can be better understood when we consider state-administered surveillance as a contributor to systemic intrusion.This

paper aims to explore the effect of dual pressures of institutional regulation and of surveillance on free intersubjective communication. As intersubjective links cause human connection which eventually leads to community building, any harm to intersubjectivity might cause an harm to communal cohesion in the long run. The text has been read using Bakhtin's dialogic technique with a special focus on the tool of double-voicing as it helps the reader to find out the relationship which different voices (from long rooted ideologies to short lived opinions) share with each other in an utterance. A dialogic close reading guides the readers to spot the point where a harmonious dialogic interaction is missing and one or two single voices are usurped by the dominant ones. Text is read for the overt and covert interactions/clash of voices and this reading is further guided by two questions: How is the dialogic nature of personal relations in the novel *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid jeopardized by the continuous process of migration? How does the status of being migrant make the lifeworld vulnerable to the systemic watch of host communities?How does (or can) displacement intensify interpersonal conflicts?

After 9/11, immigrant Muslims not only find themselves among clashing ideologies but are also gazed at for their response to this very clash. In *Exit West,* characters' forced migration from East to West places them under a subtle scrutiny which tests them for their ideological and emotional affiliation. The effects of financial and social pressure on ideological and emotional bonding are studied through textual instances that hint at intersubjectively poor communicative patterns, which help the reader understand the fragility of a displaced lifeworld. Socio-politically rooted fiction gives readers a chance to study the lives of characters whose conception is inspired by real events. The author's experiences and observations provide readers with an opportunity to empathize with situations that may initially seem remote from their own perspective.

1. Scholarly Insights about *Exit West* and Trope of Displacement in fiction

Exit West narrates the story of a continuous displacement. In the last couple of years, researchers have tried to study *Exit West* to investigate all the possible implications that this novel can possibly offer. Displacement has been studied as a traumatic experience (Luci 2020), as a global theme intrinsic to humanity (Maczynska 2020) and as a moment dealing with (im)possibility of coexistence (Pérez Zapata 2021). The prevailing theme of displacement is the thread that runs through the body of the research done so far; however, few researches entertain the moments in the immigrant fiction where the global economy and the refugees' surge for survival intersect. It is interesting to see that the writer's own intention has also been questioned in terms of his placement as a seller in a neoliberal world. While Carter (2020) identifies *Exit West* as a writer's critique on neoliberalism and mistreatment of refugee, a counter research by AlAmmouri (2020), accuses Hamid of taking side with neoliberal ideology by showing the rich world as a sympathizer which legitly allows the west to regulate the influx of migrants by incorporating them into neoliberal economy. Likewise, Alma'aqbeh & Zidan, while looking at hegemony of English language in *Exit West*, highlights Hamid giving more importance to western countries while obscuring the eastern origin of migrant characters (2022). This article also discusses displacement as a loss of migrant native languages and relates Saeed relative ease at work with his English fluency. Using *Exit West* as a

case study, the aforementioned article somehow highlights the dominance of the global system and system backed uniform code of conduct (for example speaking English as a survival imperative). By taking lead from existing research about *Exit West,* the article takes a step further to ask: How does the global system affect immigrants' mutual bonding and connection with the past? To find the answer, the theme of forced immigration in the selected novel is examined as an agent which makes lifeworld colonization possible by letting the administrative and financial imperatives dictate emotional and sentimental life of uprooted subjects.

2. Colonization of Lifeworld Components: An understanding of theoretical Torchbearers

Habermas' proposition about lifeworld colonization is inspired by Marx 'concept of *real abstraction* "which takes place when interactions are no longer coordinated via norms and values, or via processes of reaching understanding, but via the medium of exchange value"(336). Habermas takes communication as a central variable to study the extent of the deterioration of human interaction, and he does so by looking into three communication centric processes: cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization. The Habermasian lifeworld rests on three components: Culture, society, and personality. These three processes which, in Habermsian conception, are responsible for the continuation of the lifeworld. Habermas explains the interconnection of lifeworld components and centrality of communication in the following words:

> By culture I mean the stock of knowledge upon which participants in communication draw in order to provide themselves with interpretations that will allow them to reach understanding [with one another].By society I mean the legitimate orders through which participants in communication regulate their membership in social groups, and thereby secure solidarity. Under personality I understand the competences that make subjects capable of speech and action, and thus enable them to participate in processes of reaching understanding, and thereby assert their own identity (Habermas as quoted by Baxter 1987, 47)

A keen attention to the working of aforementioned three components and corresponding processes helps to investigate the internal cohesion of any given society. The interpretative patterns which are transmitted in the process of cultural reproduction "connect up new situations with the existing conditions of the lifeworld" (Habermas 1987, 137). This collective sensibility works in the dimension of "social space" and "historical time" and generates solidarity among social groups and successive generations (Habermas 1987, 137-138).

Lifeworld is "intersubjectively constituted" (Bernstein 1995, 197). Once intersubjectivity is jeopardized, lifeworld processes lose their continuity. By taking lead from Habermas, the issues of disintegration in immigrant family and community structure can be grasped by locating possible loss of meaning in lifeworld processes in the given communicative moment. The word *meaning* here can be understood in terms of intersubjectively built understanding as the subjects of lifeworld creates meaning through intersubjectively constructed narratives which produce shared values and ideologies (Gady and

Archer 1996, 138). According to Habermas society is "legitimately ordered around intersubjective relationships" (Esquembre 2020, 5). Once the meaning is lost, society starts showing signs of disintegration. What causes this loss of meaning or what jeopardizes intersubjective existence? In Habermas conception of system-lifeworld dichotomy, its instrumental rationality of system whose financial (money) and administrative (power) mechanisms overshadow the centrality of communication in the lifeworld. This reduction in the importance of communication paves way for colonization:

> In the end, systemic mechanisms suppress forms of social integration even in those
> areas where a consensus- dependent coordination of action cannot be replaced, that
> is, where the symbolic reproduction of the lifeworld is at stake. In these areas, the
> mediatisation of the lifeworld assumes the form of a colonization. (Habermas 1987,
> 196)

Symbols emerge as linguistic and non-linguistic representations that carry shared meanings within a given community or society Sy. They secure meaning and respect through intersubjectively conceived values during the process of cultural transmission. When human consciousness orients towards economic and administrative imperatives (where fixity of rules replace fluidity of consensus), the very consensus gathers a group of people around values which take their validation from past (stock of knowledge) to make sense of present and future (through received interpretative patterns).

Habermas and Foucault: Theoretical proximity of colonized lifeworld and panopticon

The critical interest of Foucault and Habermas in the implicit working of power and the resistance of human agency makes their theoretical concepts mutually enriching. "Habermas hopes to revitalize the Marxian tradition of social critique by advancing communicative action as both the theoretical framework and the practical means through which citizen/subjects might reestablish their hold over institutions of power" (Marmura, 9). Foucault's critique of institutional control is not concerned "with the possession of power but its exercise, application and effects, and how it circulates through the social body" (Joseph, 154-155). Without making any claim like Haberrmas about communicative action as an emancipatory tool (used by citizens to resist economic and administrative pressures) Foucault prefers to concentrate on "the 'how' of power" ((Marsden 1999, 26). Foucault's search for the answer of this "how" leads him to discover "the processes by which subjects are constituted as the effects of power" (Joseph 2004, 155). Foucault hints at human consciousness as a locale where power exerts its control and it does so through panoptic gaze to inculcate obedience through "mechanisms of observation" which not only keep watch but "penetrate into men's behavior" (Foucault 1975/2008, 202). Sthal comments while concluding his argument regarding theoretical proximity between Habermas and Foucault that "neither Habermas nor Foucault could easily be called a Marxist but their intellectual and institutional development is closely linked to Marxist thought" as both,like Marxist, are interested in power dynamics but are not contented to restrict the play of power within the parameters of class struggle.

Sthal finds Foucault and Habermas compatible to study communication as one looks for the hidden working of power which defines words and thus controls discourse, and later looks at the ideal speech

situation which is emancipating. Sthal's brief work suggests that Foucault might help us to locate the danger which might sabotage Habermas ideal speech situation. Allen agrees with Macarthy (1996) that other than picking one from Habermas and Foucault, a combined theoretical understanding can be of great use. His combined interest in habermas and Foucault to study the importance of transparency seems to take a lead from Foucault's fear of exploitative nature of surveillance when it comes to sharing of personal details. For Habermas discourse is the transformation of personal detail and it "requires participants in discourse to be transparent so that some understanding can be achieved", and this flow of truthful transparent personal "is incompatible with being repressed" (Allen 2008, 331). Foucault's conception regarding the working of surveillance does not negate Habermas's emphasis on being truthfully extrovert (as absence of sharing sabotages the real purpose of discursive interaction) but rather highlights a possibility of exploitations of this transparency by surveilling mechanism. Surveillance can be taken as one of various factors which represses communication and this repression starts with repression of subjectivity - control the thought behind words and words will eventually serve the controlling force.The theoretical proximity of Habermas and Foucault lies in concern about the subjugation of human subjectivity.This thesis is one of many researches which has made this meeting point a rationale for using both Habermasian and Foucauldian lens. Marmura (2008) starts his article with a claim that *Theory of Communicative Action* provides distinct advantages for considering both the evolving character of surveillance … and related changes to human subjectivity and culture (1). Marmura makes a reference to Lasch and Habermas to also state that "pathological personality" are symptomatic of rather "general phenomenon" (2008, 13). The pathology which a social critic is interested in is of intellectual and emotional type. Personality is (inter)subjective and the implicit cause and effect sort of relation between surveillance and crippled subjectivity is hinted at when communication is said to lose its emancipatory vigor under the control of "hidden structures and forces serving to limit political participation" (Marmura, 3). Foucault's elaboration of panopticon enhances the theorization of hidden structures in the lives of surveilled immigrant communities. For a community/society where surveillance is practiced both at governmental and social level, the concept of panoptic control can very well extend the model of lifeworld and system by introducing itself as a means of control working hand in hand with economic and administrative apparatuses of the system. This compatibility also lies in the fact that one diagnoses the problem and the other gives a solution: Faoucault makes it possible for a person to decipher whether he/she is living in a panoptic moment and Habermas looks for the possibility of emancipation. If in Foucault's conception, surveillance (or ideological surveillance for that matter) was a regressive factor with an impetus of ideological control, Kemmis finds Habermas offering a possible solution to the said problem.Surveillance can often be seen working as fixed discursive practices that gaze upon the subjects associated with any given institutions and makes them feel "as irrevocably named and captured" (Kemmmis 2006, 38). If discursive practices can act as a fixed rule, Habermas's idea of communicative action can be used to challenge the fixity with the help of an ongoing process of communication and mutual understanding (Kemmis 2006). Habermas' reliance on the emancipatory function of communicative action does also entertain a possibility that if the control (gaze in Foucault's words) of fixed normalization can be treated with evolving power of mutual communication, this process can

anytime be jeopardized provided that the surveillance manages to enter the thought behind communication. Foucault's concept of panoptic surveillance can aid in the examination of communicative actions under systemic surveillance, as in both Habermas' colonized lifeworld and the panopticon, communication is either controlled or eliminated. The compartmentalization of the inmates, and lack of communication seems to directly correspond to disturbances in the processes of the lifeworld. The regulatory tendency of systemic mechanisms resembles surveilling power of the control tower in a panopticon and the lack of communication facilitates working of power in both cases and as the dominant ideologies (voices) start taking over cultural and religious ones causing communicative breach in the said domains.

Bakhtinian method: Dialogic reading technique

Dialogic approach is helpful when the word is taken "as sign of someone else's semantic position…if we hear in it someone else's voice" (Bakhtin 1984, 184). The presence of different voices in a single utterance and their mutual relationship is studied through a lens of double-voicing. Bakhtin proposed three types of double-voicing which rests on the fact that two voices (or two consciousnesses) are bound to intersect ideologically: unidirectional, vari-directional and hidden Internal polemic or hidden dialogue. Different types of double-voicing depend on the degree of intersubjectivity which can yield three possible results: "fusion of voices", disintegration of internally dialogized voices in two separate discourses, and deforming influence of one "discourse on the other" (Bakhtin 1984, 199). This dialogic approach helps us to locate the moments where voices intersect to shape (non)verbally built interpersonal connection.

3. Life under systemic pressure: Tracing un/making of lifeworld through double-voicing in *Exit west*

The analysis of *Exit West* is anchored by the question of how the dialogic nature of personal relations and social life is jeopardized by the continuous process of migration in the novel and how the migration makes the lifeworld vulnerable to systematic watch of the host communities. Personality is the crucial component of the lifeworld and if the magical doors challenge boundaries, the personalities are also challenged by accelerating change. The momentary convergence of boundaries through magical doors is followed by diverging responses to new realities. The novelty of the condition does not have any clue in the stock of knowledge- a phrase introduced by Habermas- possessed by the displaced ones. As a result, the wandering group finds itself plucked out of its comfort zone -no matter how little the amount of comfort is. The intense (re)reading of the texts offers three themes: memory as a generational and communal link, an urge to build relations, and the effect of regulatory forces on interpersonal relationships. These three themes can be used to three different manifestations of (disturbed) dialogic relation. I would treat immigrants' displacement as a thread that runs through the narrative and all the above mentioned themes can be explored in the backdrop of displacement.

Memory loss and memory preservation: Remembrance as an intergenerational cultural link

Memory is an awareness of the past. When memory carries carefully preserved facts, it can very well be called knowledge of the past and the very act of remembering informs the present happenings in the light of the past. For Bakhtin, a *word* is dialogic as it carries the shades of all those meanings which its usage might have conveyed in different expressions and at different times. So it seems that a *word* is ridden with memories. While Bakhtin has not explicitly mentioned memory, his idea of the word is imbued with the echoes of past moments, individuals, and ideologies: "Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions" (Bakhtin 1982, 293).

Thus the highlighted sense of the word in any given moment is the result of dialogical entwinement of all possible senses that a word is laden with. This dialogicality hints at the diversity of opinions and their interconnectivity. Habermas talks about this interconnectivity when he talks about intergenerational link: "Our form of life is connected with that of our parents and grandparents through a web of familial, local, political, and intellectual traditions that is difficult to disentangle" (Habermas 2018, 233). Habermas's intergenerational link is *word*, when it is communicated in the given moment and transmitted over a time. Bouacida (2021) hints at the sinister attempt of the dominant white voice to infiltrate black communal memory which proves to be a tool for the female protagonist to reconcile with her present dilemmas. If in Habermas' perception, the dominant system hinders transformation of common interpretation across generations, this breach in generational communication can be located in memory. Remembrance (a means to solidify intergenerational link) and the reception of memory by the characters of the novel illuminate the characters' concern for the past itself and for the others' attitude towards the past. Memory-ridden textual inferences can be explored for the interplay of displacement, surveillance and memory. The keen lens of double-voicing uncovers the change in the expression and reception of memory which eventually contributes to nuances of interpersonal interaction.

Saeed's parents share pleasant memories and cherish their past. The war ridden city still holds few remnants of their past; and despite a change the new businesses have brought to the city's aesthetic culture, the surviving name of a bygone cinema manages to resonate with Saeed's parents. In a micro lifeworld, common stock of knowledge (shared memory) can been seen in the subtle yet unison response of Saeed's parents towards cinema's old name: "seeing that old name on its new neon sign, sometimes Saeed's father, sometimes Saeed's mother, would remember, and smile" (Hamid, 12). They both remember, they both smile and the reason is not only the traces of their pleasant past but also an awareness that both spectators are sharing the same spirit of remembrance. Two consciousnesses are aware of each other's orientation of memory and synchronization shows that two memories, two voices, are unidirectional. Cinema is gone and the name is still there. Post-displacement life is somehow resisting cultural ruptures; although the onset of war would combine the sense of romantic union with the sense of impending loss within a single *word:* the name of cinema (emphasis added). The voice which remembers the past syncs with the voice hinting at the same nostalgic tendency in expected interlocutors, and the

collective remembrance is shaped out of unidirectional double-voicing. Let us infer from this that shared memories heighten dialogic awareness. This inference can be used as a point of departure and the analysis embarks on the investigation of all those textual chunks which in any way celebrate memory or enact remembrance. If mutually shared and celebrated memories harmonize the play of voices in the given interlocutors' consciousness, an otherwise situation can also be worthy of analysis. In the post-displacement account of the protagonists' lives, the disregard of Nadia for Saeed's memories and Saeed's awareness of this regard in advance causes rifts in their relationship. The free spirited Nadia, who even in her native city was not the part of any form of lifeworld (be it a family or society)finds herself more comfortable with all varieties of movement, while in Saeed the impulse of nostalgia was stronger,perhaps because his childhood had been more idyllic" (Hamid, 90). Besides using this extremely positive adjective "Idyllic", Hamid gives us enough glimpses of the type of bonding Saeed shared with his family. The importance of consensus and communication in Saeed's family life alludes to the importance of communication in the sphere of the lifeworld in general and within the domain of the private sphere in specific. Family, being a microcosm of society, hints at how society works at large; and at the level of society, the lifeworld is structured around "linguistically mediated, normatively guided interaction" (Habermas 1987, 156). Norms are transmitted from one generation to another and Habermas locates this generational link within the domain of family: "a group composed of parents and children living together in the same place" (Habermas 1987, 157). The home Saeed shares with his family is ridden with memories of togetherness: "he ran his finger over the apartment's furniture …and folded a photograph of his parents" and this all happened while Nadia "checked and rechecked the smallish backpacks" (95-96). Later on, Saeed placed it on the bookshelf of their temporary bedroom to transform it "partially, temporarily,into a home" (120).

Saeed's family personifies Habermas' conception of ideal family, a microcosm with its own micro-lifeworld orients around shared memories which trickle down through communication and maintains intergenerational links. But Nadia misses both: family and link, thus she and Saeed have different attitudes towards past and memory, even the one they make together in the initial phase of their relationship. The call to prayer invokes different images for both Nadia and Saeed. Nadia's own recollection of the war-ridden city is followed by a surprise caused by Saeed's act of praying. The brief moment of surprise invites the reader to look into the working of two voices in Nadia's consciousness: one which relates the call to prayer with war, and other which questions Saeed's inclination to pray. The dominant presence of these two voices does not leave space for the third one: the voice of Saeed's consciousness in the current moment of displacement. For Saeed, prayers are the continuity of his parents' tradition and Nadia's own estrangement from both family and tradition, makes her misinterpret Saeed's motives.

A memory, which keeps Saeed in contact with his lost family (or with a microcosmic lifeworld), seems entirely missing in the case of Nadia. Memory is like a normative pattern which offers an interpretative point of departure and facilitates the recipient of memory to "secure the continuity of tradition and a coherence of knowledge" (Habermas as quoted by Baxter, 1987). No past patterns have

been transmitted or communicated to Nadia, as transmission requires communication; Nadia used to have a very weak communicative link with her family, a link which was a mediated one (the next section discusses this mediation in detail). Nadia's micro-lifeworld used to be crisis ridden because of failed cultural reproduction engendered by "loss of meaning" (Habermas as quoted by Baxter, 48).

The discussion can better be summarized with the help of borrowed phrases that shared memory is a "substantive dimension of lifeworld" which allows the people to identify with each other through "the examples of the past" (Sik 2014, 60). Mutual identification helps in making new, and in maintaining existing relationships. It is seen that mnemonic gestures get intensified in displacement because that's how displaced beings deal with physical mental disorientation by making them a part of temporal continuity. People who once were part of a community and manage to keep alive this sense (both meaning and memory of belonging), can construct a lifeworld by using old shreds of past knowledge. This discussion raises a question: Does the loss of memory hint at lack of interpersonal bonding? By taking lead from Habermas's theorization of social integration(the second crucial process of lifeworld) the next section deals with the mechanism of interpersonal connection both in the pre- and post-displacement parts of the narrative. The tool of double voicing helps us to track the subtle change in the orientation of the different voices working behind the thoughts and discourse of the characters.

Lifeworld before displacement: Shared pain and humane connection

Making new relationships, either out of love or need, is a recurrent theme of the novel. Amid war, the spirit of cohabitation is manifested every now and then, either in Saeed's desire to marry Nadia or Saeed's father's acceptance of Nadia as a suitable match for Saeed. Even the free spirited Nadiaty could not resist for long the idea of living with Saeed's family. *Exit West* can be divided in two halves: the first half details the life of the characters before displacement and the second half deals with post-displacement moment(s). For the readers of migration based novels, the accounts of hunger and fear are not new; what stands out here is a lucid change in interpersonal communication between Saeed and Nadia. In Nadia's case, cultural meaning fails to get transmitted. While Nadia acts out of survival instinct, Saeed strives for cohabitation in the moment of crisis; that's why he preferred to live with his parents while Nadia chose a solo path. It is also important to notice that the life of a migrant does not really correspond to any interpretative scheme that Saeed's lifeworld has offered him. Any sort of transmission requires communication: one to one talk. From the perspective of the lifeworld, "uncurtailed communication" ensures negotiation among social actors who make use of their past experiences and understanding to reach "common definitions" of the situation through negotiation (Habermas 1984, 95). In the case of Nadia and Saeed, conversation often lacks the element of negotiation, and an increasing disparity between their perception makes everyday interactions really tense. But this disparity gets vivid after migration. How does displacement intensify already existing conflicts? To find the answer to this question, we have to look at the interpersonal interactions before the moment of migration.

The whole novel is a spectrum of possibilities human relations may come across. Characters' verbal and non-verbal interactions hint at the everchanging human relations with the change in the surrounding situation. Human interaction is the interaction of minds. Double voicing is all about interactive

consciousnesses, and the prevalent themes of struggle and survival of human relations can be explored by dissecting the manner of interactive voices. "In a city swollen by refugees …not yet openly at war…a young man met a woman …and did not speak to her " (Hamid, 1). The very first page and the very first sentence speak to the lack of communication, the presence of refugees, and the possibility of impending war. On the same page, the writer says that the character takes "an evening class on corporate identity and product branding" (Hamid, 1). Irony of the situation is so vivid: two people who are learning to work in a large group of employees have not communicated so far, or the communication is not important as their working skills are oriented towards product branding. But it is also implied that the young man and the woman are not refugees rather citizens of the city swollen by refugees, and they managed to talk. The initiation of Saeed and Nadia's relation is intertwined with the maintenance of their identity as non-refugee. Their connection with the same city helps them develop a communicative connection. So they talk. Saeed's very first attempt to talk to Nadia exhibit unidirectional double voice discourse (DVD) as he anticipates Nadia's religiously oriented response and stylizes his offer accordingly: " Would you like to have a coffee,...to make it less forward given her conservative attire, 'in the cafeteria?"(Hamid, p.2). This caution on the part of Saeed alludes to and can be elaborated under the concept of rational communication. Here Saeed's own intention (voice) interacts with Nadia's expected reaction (addressee's voice) as a conservative female, and he stylizes his voice according to her. This display of unidirectional DVD is somehow facilitated by a "culturally transmitted and linguistically organized stock of interpretive patterns" (Habermas, 124). Unidirectional DVD crosses paths with culturally transmitted manners of talking and one element of the lifeworld seems to be at play despite visible instances of social unrest. This possibility of a consensus can be understood in terms of the orientation of the consciousness around different factors constructing a social milieu which cradles the given consciousness.

Militants' ideology with their extremely fanatic attitude regarding dress code and inter-gender interaction, are one which enters the concisionuss of characters as a distinct competing voice. Militants with their extremist ideology emerge as an administrative force using power to control the society. While Saeed's parents keep this fanatic influence at bay, Nadia's parents seem to internalize this ideological surveillance. Hamid does not give any account of Nadia's interaction with her family in terms of dialogue, but provides enough material to imagine the type of conversation they might have if there be any conversation at all. The readers can imagine a constrained dialogical interaction where a dominant religious (and prevailing dominant) voice shows lack of concern for Nadia's reaction and as a result "her constant questioning and growing irreverence in matters of faith upset and frightened him" (Hamid, 18). Does the voice (opinion) of Nadia's father align with that of extremists? or does he do that by internalizing the fear of being held accountable for any deviancy? We do not know much about this man except "he tried to be quiet" but not out of habit and that he "regretted" having let his daughter go but did not try to patch up "partly out of stubbornness, partly out of bafflement". The readers get to know about the play of contrasting voices in the father's mind; he stylizes his own parental control according to the demand of the dominant ideology of those who have the power to control the society. This assumed docility of Nadia's father towards a certain code of conduct results in denunciation of the meek voice

hinting at Nadia's dreams. The very first instance of Nadia's thought process is replete with a mixture of Veri-directional and Active-double voicing. Her response to her father's single voice is dealt with parodic resistance;while she is never able to get rid of the religious ideology of her parents, she responds to it by replacing the religious motive of certain acts with her own interpretations. She "speaks in someone else's discourse, but … introduces into that discourse a semantic intention that is directly opposed to the original one" (Bakhtin 1984, 193). She continues to use her gown to hide not only her own culturally and religious transgressive life-style but also her lover. The episode of Nadia's bitter relationship with her family took place before her migration, but it sets the stage for the upcoming chaos and somehow foreshadows the decline of interpersonal bonds among those under the watchful eye of those in power and with access to resources.

Demand for conformity internalized by Nadia's family and the family breaks apart as feeling of ideological surveillance does not let Nadia's father to negotiate with Nadia's apparent deviancy. The overwhelming presence of intrusive dictating voice (I would equate it to single voiced authoritative discourse emerging out of daily dialogic efforts) not only manifests itself in the form of literal fights but also in the form clashes of voices which take deep roots in Nadia's personality and "which are not only isolated from one another, separated by a distance, but are also hostilely opposed" (Hmaid, 193). In a lifeworld, differences are negotiated and consensus is made without any feeling of being coerced into an agreement. But the internalization of control or sense of being watched makes one party submissive and other resistant, and this resistance can be observed in the way Nadia and Saeed take off the black robe. It shows the protest of their own voice against the one belonging to those who control the society: "She Laughed, 'Together, then.' They stood and pulled off their robes …and underneath both were wearing jeans and sweaters (Hamid, 42). Nadia's inner dressing contrasts with her outer attire and the overwhelming, dictatorial voices that prophesize a strict code of conduct.

The human agency to give voice and to support one's point of view is exercised through Saeed's corrective response to Nadia's inquisitorial assault on Saeed's negligence of evening prayer: "I think it's personal. Each of us has his own way. Or…her own way". Saeed somehow controls his disregard of Nadia's religiosity along with mitigating the difference of opinion with "halting quality to the speech, and its interruption by reservations" (Bakhtin 1984, 205). This very first exchange of words between Saeed and Nadia paves the way for their relationship and active double-voicing can be seen working in terms of hidden polemics between Saeed's own opinion and the expected response of Nadia. The result is a dialogical expression which communicates Saeed's opinion about religious rituals, and he also accommodates Nadia's perspective by thoughtfully adding the phrase: "her own way" (Hamid, 3). Bakhtin locates this dialogic and rational interaction in the moment where "the other person's discourse begins to influence authorial discourse from within" and "one word acutely senses alongside it someone else's word speaking about the same object, and this awareness determines its structure" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 196). The influence of Saeed and his father's thoughts (voices) invokes a desire in Nadia to become part of their familial bond. Nadia enters Saeed's household because she finds it difficult to survive alone, but once she becomes the part of the family, the interpretative patterns of Saeed's micro-lifeworld enters Nadia's consciousness as well and she prefers to maintain physical distance from Saeed. Though this was

a momentary abstinence, it shows that Nadia is not acting out of a survival instinct but rather wants to be a part of Saeed's lifeworld which is rooted in the limits set by Saeed's parents. These limits have not been transmitted as a conformity code but communicated by letting the recipients rationalize the norms of coexistence.

But that's what is happening before migration. After the displacement, the administrative control, a new financial and hierarchical setup, gets more insidious, and the colonization thesis of Habermas starts to resonate with internalization of surveillance.

Surveillance and displacement: Temporary lifeworlds and infiltration of interpersonal relations

It has been discussed that Nadia's father somehow internalizes the fear of being watched and wants his daughter to comply with the prevailing narrative. Now, it is Saeed's turn to internalize surveillance. And it was twofold: a gaze of a newly forged religiously bonded group and a monitoring of an internalized concern for survival. In London, Saeed treats his estrangement by getting under the wings of his countrymen who are observant of a strict religious code of conduct. The same Saeed, who had once stylized his discourse by preemptively accommodating an expected response by Nadia and calling religion a personal choice, now has started keeping Nadia at arm's length for her estrangement from religion. Saeed somehow goes against the rituals of the lifeworld by being a dictator. Habermas's lifeworld is the arena where communication makes the reproduction of culture possible through rationalization where logic is negotiated not imposed. The process of negotiation both preserves culture and entertains new possibilities (or opinions) like meiosis which both preserves genetic continuity and produces variations. By his silent reprimand of Nadia's attitude towards religion, Saeed somehow goes against the norms of his own childhood lifeworld where he has never been coerced into performing religious rituals: "He had seen his mother and father praying … and saw their faces after they had prayed, usually smiling, as though relieved, or released,...and so he asked to learn before his parents had yet thought of teaching him" (Hamid, 109).Somehow child Saeed reasons to himself and concludes that praying leads to smiles. The whole process of learning to pray turns out to be a silent dialogue between young and mature minds where the young mind is allowed to reason.

Communicative action is not only about "the existence of dialogue, but the process of rational justification and reasoned argument", and it ensures acceptance of different opinions as a gesture of "reciprocity" (Boucher 2014, 194). This very accommodation of new opinions ensures "renewal of traditions" by ensuring individuals' readiness to criticize and their ability to innovate (Habermas 1987, 146). The cohabitation of Saeed and Nadia in their native city owes a great deal to the acceptance of differences of opinions and this element of acceptance starts diminishing in displacement. Saeed is certainly under the influence of new togetherness and feels to be watched by the newly formed religious fellowship which makes him feel part of something, "not just something spiritual, but something human" (Hamid, 148). When the tool of double-voicing is used to trace the multiple voices in Saeed's consciousness (owing to his transnational mobility and resultant uncertainty) three different types of voices stand out: Saeed's own desire to rekindle his love with Nadia, Saeed's fear of being alone in

foreign land, and the opinion of newly forged religious groups with an administrative aura. A subtle resemblance between the behaviors of Saeed and Nadia's father can be seen as both have the sense of being watched. In Saeed's case, his survival instinct leads him to be a part of a religious regulatory body who opts for an "only civilized way to cram" people into house by making a rule of separating opposite genders. Saeed's introduction of Nadia as his wife shows that the ideological surveillance which Saeed resists in his Native land now enters his consciousness with the entrance of the "white-marked beard" man in his life (Hamid, 149). Saeed tries to enter (though momentarily) this religious cooperation at the expense of his proximity with Nadia. It can be said that Saeed draws to religion as in the memory of his parents's happy faces after prayer. Alghaberi and Mukherjee have studied different aspects of memory in the diaspora experience and infer that "remembering, as an act, situates" an uprooted being in a larger social context. But for Nadia, the group of Muslim Saeed's friends is like a reminder of her father's watchful gaze back in her native land. Nadia rejects them: "they are not like me", and the use of a single persona pronoun shows that she is not paying heed to what this togetherness means to Saeed (Hamid, 149-150). Likewise, Saeed forgets that Nadia was not very fond of her country-men or religious restrictions. Before the next and a rather severe pang of desire of being a part of collectivity, Saeed and Nadia 's interpersonal space is intruded upon by their commodification as a workforce and the exchange of their work " migrants were promised forty meters and a pipe, ad a connection to all the utilities of modernity" (Hamid, 168). For some time their desire for each other's company is replaced by their need for a shelter which can only be acquired through hard work. Saeed and Nadia's relationship now enters a circle of getting tired, feeling hungry, eating insufficiently just to go through this all over again to secure their own dwelling. Somehow their efforts for their house widen their interpersonal gap other than shortening the wait for their own house. By the end of the day, they find themselves so exhausted that"they can barely speak" or touch each other. Immigrants which were difficult to expel with the fear of death, are not being controlled with the desire of a comparatively better future. And now when these immigrants speak they speak of "paving and positions on waiting lists and politics, but not of his parents, and not any more of travel" (Hamid, 187). Materialistic concerns eventually overshadow emotional and sentimental interpersonal and intergenerational connection.

Conclusion

In Habermas's lifeworld, communicative interactions both ensure and take birth from this shared interpretation. In a society where regulatory media like power and money bypass communicative rationalization and promote goal oriented attitude, human connections start to wither. This model of Habermas for a crumbling lifeworld helps us to study the pathologies of (im)migrant societies at the level of interpersonal interaction. Double voicing gives us a chance to reflect on the transformational nature of interpersonal relations, and the interpersonal discursive space of Nadia and Saeed is infiltrated by survival imperatives. Resultantly, when they speak, the voices oriented to addressee's expectations yield to one oriented to materialistic existence. Love birds,who were once happy in each other's company, are now being carried away by regulatory bodies' " manipulation through distorted communication" and "false representations of material interests" (Boucher 2014, 194). The insidious nature of power of the system,

which tried to channelize the relation either in the name of religious policing back home or in the name of materialistic survival in the host country, shows its effects at both communal and familial level.

To study the immigrant lifeworld, surveillance of displaced ones is highlighted as an accomplice of intrusive media of power and money. Displacement causes rupture in the continuity of the lifeworld by letting regulatory institutions of the host country take hold of culturally uprooted immigrants. Uncertainty of financial future and suspicion in the eyes of the host gazes at the immigrants. The dominant voices infiltrate immigrants' conscience and they as interlocutors fall prey to overt polemics that lead to silence or clash. In the moment of displacement, this ideological control of the socio-economic strains changes the orientation of voices, and negatively affects the interpersonal discursive interactions responsible for the internal cohesion of the lifeworld. The immigrant community dealing with this chronic dialogic failure can further be explored in fictional renditions and journalistic accounts about immigrants.

فشل الحوار في عالم الهجرة: تحليل لرواية (الخروج إلى الغرب) للكاتب محسن حامد

عروج وحيد، منور إقبال أحمد
قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في الجامعة الجوية، باكستان

الملخص

تتناول هذه المقالة تعرض الأنظمة الاقتصادية والإدارية على عالم الهجرة في رواية *(الخروج إلى الغرب)* للكاتب محسن حامد. تم تخصيص مفهوم استعمار العالم الحي لهابرماس بمراعاة الرصد الشامل كشريك للضغوط المالية والسياسية التي تتسبب في توترات في التواصل بين الأفراد. تأثير التوترات والرصد النظامي المتراكم على التفاعل بين الشخصيات تحت المراقبة، سواء كان ذلك تواصلًا شفهيًا أو غير شفهي، يتم دراسته من خلال عدسة حوارية للإجابة على الأسئلة التالية: كيف يتعرض الطابع الحواري للعلاقات الشخصية في رواية *(الخروج إلى الغرب)* للخطر نتيجة لعملية الهجرة المستمرة؟ كيف تجعل حالة الهجرة عالم الحي عرضة للمراقبة النظامية من قبل المجتمعات المضيفة؟ كيف تزيد عملية التشرد من الصراعات الشخصية؟ تستخدم المقالة قراءة نصية حوارية لدراسة لعب الأيديولوجيات المدعومة من النظام والدور المزعوم للسرد السائد المعطى على مستوى التواصل الشخصي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المهاجرون، عالم الحياة، التعبير المزدوج، المراقبة.

References

AlAmmouri, Bayan. 2020. Privatizing Refugees' Human Rights in Hamid's Exit West, Coetzee's The Childhood of Jesus and The Schooldays of Jesus, and Hosseini's Sea Prayer. *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies* 20 (2): 205-222. DOI:10.33806/ijaes2000.20.2.11.

Alma'aqbeh, Hala and Mahmoud Zidan. 2021. Exit English? Reflections on Linguistic Imperialism in Mohsin Hamid's Exit West. *Jordan Journal of Modern Languages and Literatures* 13 (3): 533-547.

Ahmed, Sara. 1999. Home and Away. *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 2 (3): 329-347. DOI: 10.1177/136787799900200303.

Alghaberi, Jameel, and Sanjay Mukherjee. 2022. The Diasporic Experience in Mira Jacob's The Sleepwalker's Guide to Dancing: Assimilation, Memory, and Mourning. *Jordan Journal of Modern Languages and Literatures* 14 (3): 637-651.

Baxter, Hugh. 1987. System and Life-World in Habermas's "Theory of Communicative Action". *Theory and Society* 16 (1): 39-86.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1984. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. by Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Bakhtin, Mikhail M. 1982. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, edited. and trans. by Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bernstein, Richard J. 1995. The Retrieval of the Democratic Ethos. Review of Japanese Culture and Society 7: 1-12. Published by University of Hawai'i Press.

Bizzini, Chiara. 2020. Narratives of Disposability in Contemporary British Fiction: Monica Ali's In the Kitchen and John Lanchester's Capital. *English Studies* 101 (5): 584-597. DOI:10.1080/0013838x.2020.1798139.

Bouacida, Soumaya. 2021. Childhood is "not a story to pass on": Trauma and Memory Paradox in Toni Morrison's God Help the Child. *Jordan Journal of Modern Languages and Literatures* 13 (3): 399-410.

Boucher, Geoffrey. 2011. The Politics of Aesthetic Affect - A Reconstruction of Habermas' Art Theory. *Parrhesia* 13: 62-78.

Carter, Josephine. 2020. How Far Are We Prepared to Go? Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* and the Refugee Crisis. *Textual Practice* 35 (4): 619-638. DOI:10.1080/0950236X.2020.1745877

Foucault, Michel. 1975. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan. London: Vintage Books.

Habermas, Jürgen.1984. *The Theory of Communicative Action: Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. London: Beacon Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 1987. *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 2: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*. London: Beacon Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 2018. *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historian's Debate*. London: John Wiley & Sons.

Hamid, Mohsin. 2017. *Exit West.* New York: Penguin Books.

Heyman, Rob and Jo Pierson. 2015. Social Media, Delinguistification and Colonization of Lifeworld: Changing Faces of Facebook. S*ocial Media + Society* (1) 2: 1-11. DOI:10.1177/2056305115621933.

Husserl, Edmund, and Donn Welton. 1970. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*. Chicago: Northwestern University Press.

Kemmis, Stephen. 2006. Participatory Action Research and the Public Sphere. *Educational Action Research* 14 (4): 459-476. DOI:10.1080/09650790600975593.

Luci, Maria. 2020. Displacement as Trauma and Trauma as Displacement in the Experience of Refugees. *Journal of Analytical Psychology* (65) 2: 260-280. DOI:10.1111/1468-5922.12590.

Mączyńska, Marta. 2020. People Are Monkeys Who Have Forgotten That They Are Monkeys: The Refugee as Eco-Cosmopolitan Allegory in Mohsin Hamid's Exit West. *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 28 (3): 1089-1106. DOI:10.1093/isle/isaa082.

Marmura, Stephen. 2008. Surveillance, Mass Culture and the Subject: A Systems/Lifeworld Approach. *Democratic Communiqué* 22 (2): Fall 2008

Ortega-Esquembre, César. 2020. Social Pathologies and Ideologies in Light of Jürgen Habermas: A New Interpretation of the Thesis of Colonisation." *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 72

Pérez Zapata, Beatriz. 2021. Transience and Waiting in Mohsin Hamid's Exit West. *The European Legacy: Toward New Paradigms* 26 (7-8): 764-774. DOI:10.1080/10848770.2021.196971

Sik, Domonkos. 2014. Critical Theory and Political Socialization. *Belvedere Meridionale* 26 (4): 56-63. DOI:10.14232/belv.2014.4.4.