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Bodies as Crisis: A Foucauldian Discourse Analysis of Dystopian Migration in Exit West by Mohsin Hamid

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dystopian migration, surveillance, power, violence, discourse, Exit West, Foucault

ABSTRACT

This paper examines how migrant bodies become sites of crisis within contemporary migration narratives. It analyses the intersections of power, surveillance, and violence in a postcolonial, globalized context, applying Foucauldian discourse analysis to Mohsin Hamid's Exit West. The study explores how disciplinary power regulates and normalizes migrants through mechanisms of control, including surveillance and the panoptic gaze imposed by host nations. Focusing on key themes such as border crossings, refugee camps, and displacement, the paper highlights the marginalization and objectification of migrant bodies through Foucault's theory of power. It argues that modern global systems perpetuate new forms of domination and control, shaping migrants' experiences of vulnerability and identity. Ultimately, the analysis reveals how structural violence and global governance transform migration into a dystopian condition of crisis.

Introduction

The concept of "migration" has become the most significant subject in all works of literature as it is the main element of socio-political structures of modern societies. In the contemporary world, migration is an interaction between individual ambitions and social forces. Many migrants leave their home countries for better lifestyles and economic opportunities. They are often driven by poverty, unemployment and economic inequality. However, Migrants, especially from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), are subjected to unique forms of prejudice and violence. They encounter racism and Islamophobia, which both result in violent acts. As one of the study reports, "The majority of those [migrants] who have fled the violence are in a dramatically worse situation than before their displacement, often having brought few possessions with them and finding themselves in extreme dependency" (Rother et al., 2016, p.13). This demonstrates that violence becomes a control mechanism and an instruments of power that frequently leave migrants with few options. This means that the violence, surveillance and power over migrants reveal new forms of dystopian authoritative strategies and policies of the host countries.

In 1868, J. S. Mills used the term 'dystopia' to make a difference between it and utopia. He uttered this word about the corrupt property policy of the Irish government during his political speech. Keeping his point of view, the Oxford English Dictionary describes dystopia as "an imaginary place or condition in which everything is as bad as possible" (2023). The dystopian literary genre captivates readers because of its "tremendous transformation in the twenty-first century" (202, p.77). This transformation deeply engages with the multifaceted socio-political problems that govern contemporary society. This research focuses on the dystopian migration in the twenty-first century. In "A Dystopian Vision of the Refugee Crisis", Genova tells the harsh realities of border control. Migrants leave their homeland and settle into controlled places where "life in [the] refugee camps can be just as hellish and dehumanizing" (2017). The refugee camps are surrounded by cameras, which act as 'surveillance' over refugees (Genova, 2017). This raises the question of the privacy of migrants. This means that migrants will lose their human rights if they leave their nation. Mohsin Hamid is a contemporary Pakistani Anglophone writer. His novel, *Exit West*, is an emotional exploration of the dystopian condition of humans within the context of migration. This work addresses themes of dislocation and socio-political issues in today's world. In the narrative, the condition of migrants serves as a critical issue for analyzing violence, authority, and discipline of host countries.

This research illustrates that seemingly utopian

countries become dystopian places for migrants. This means that the opportunities migrants want to access in host countries become their unfulfilled desires. Their bodies are woven into the intricate web of global power structures as crises. So, Foucault's concepts of surveillance, power dynamics, and violence offer an inclusive framework to analyze the power structures of authoritative host countries over migrants. Foucault argues that power is not confined to specific institutions but operates at multiple levels. It is dispersed throughout various social structures. In an interview, "What our Present Is", Foucault states that power is "the exercise of something ... one can govern a person ... one can determine one's behavior in terms of a strategy by resorting to a number of tactics" (Lotringer, 1961, p.410). He claims that modern societies employ disciplinary mechanisms through institutions like prisons, schools, and hospitals to regulate individuals by shaping their behavior. He also examines the techniques employed by institutional mechanisms in governing populations. In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault argues that surveillance is a tool of subjugation and a persistent force that affects individual behavior and societal norms (2012, p. 217). He elucidates the role of surveillance and governance in modern societies. He asserts that violence is not only limited to physical harm but also includes psychological effects. In the context of dystopian migration, the violence migrants endure in the host countries causes their psychological disturbance. For instance, the continual governance and control of authoritative states over migrants make them docile bodies. They consider themselves slaves to the commanding countries, which causes a migration crisis. They start behaving according to the demands of these countries because they are under their surveillance. This research paper argues that *Exit West* portrays surveillance as an omnipresent force which shapes the experiences of migrants. This paper aims to explore how the bodies of migrants become sites of constant inspection due to the persistence of power structures.

This research aims to analyze how violence against migrant bodies is discursively constructed as a power mechanism in *Exit West*. It reveals that host countries are in power and migrants are powerless. This powerlessness to manage their lives makes the host countries dystopian sites for them. Furthermore, the study explores the long-term effects of systemic violence and control on the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of migrants. Lastly, it examines how characters resist, challenge, or negotiate these oppressive structures within the narrative. The study sheds light on human agency and resilience in the face of intensive subjugation. Through this multidimensional analysis, this research seeks to contribute to the discourse on dystopian migration, power, and human vulnerability in contemporary global contexts.

The methodology of this paper is a qualitative approach. Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* is being read and analyzed in-depth as a primary source. My work interprets the author's depiction of violence, power dynamics, and migration within the narrative. It is inclined by Michel Foucault's postcolonial theory on power, violence, and governmentality. Through Foucauldian discourse analysis, it explores the experiences of migrants, demonstrating societal pressures and power structures. Using this theoretical framework, it analyses the novel and delves more deeply into its themes. The secondary sources include books, journals, articles, and other research works around the same topic. To understand Foucauldian discourse analysis, it is essential to grasp the concept of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis refers to both "a theory of language use" and "a method for analyzing language in use" (Griffin, 2013, p.95). Discourse provides the "(re)production of power relations in society" along with "the interpretative schema operating within the society" (Griffin, 2013, p. 98). In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault argues that discourses are the systems of knowledge and practices that determine how one views the world and how he/she behave in society (1972, p. 96). He explains how authoritative bodies shape discourse and knowledge "with the establishment of power relations" (1972, p. 45) to impose power. In *Subject and Power*, Foucault claims that the knowledge of power must be "the total structure of actions brought to bear" (1982, p.220) on the actions of others and the evasions challenged by those actions. Foucault also argues that power in medieval society was consolidated primarily through the exertion of sovereign authority, which maintained complete control over subjects through violence. Power, violence, and migration all come together in *Exit West*, which Hamid expertly creates through comprehensive language. Hamid focuses on civil war, relocation,

personal identification, and the destruction caused by power relations. Foucault accentuates the role of discourse in shaping power structures. In the novel, migration issues play a significant role in shaping power dynamics. The narrative manipulates an interplay of power dynamics, such as the supremacy of individuals over others or even one political section over another.

Theoretical Framework

Hannah Arendt defines violence as "distinct from power, force, or strength - always needs implements" (1970, p. 4). Indeed, the practice of violence can be acceptable under certain conditions, for instance, to defend the public from external threats (Arendt, 1970, p. 51). However, the power to communally practice violence "kept in existence by the [...] means of promise and covenant" (Arendt, 1970, p. 176). Sorel also proclaims, "the role of violence in history appears singularly great... as to awaken them [i.e. the middle class] to a sense of their own class sentiment" (2004, p. 90). On the other hand, Foucault describes violence as bodily harm: "A relationship of violence acts upon a body or upon things; it forces, it bends, it breaks on the wheel, it destroys, or it closes the door on all possibilities" (1982, p. 789). Instead, power is the capacity to influence the behaviors or intentions of other agents. Contrary to violence, power only disturbs those who act at liberty because they "are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments may be realized" (Foucault, 1982, p. 790). Both Foucault and Arendt identify a significant connection between freedom and power.

Foucault elucidates in *The Subject and Power* that power is "a mode of action...an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future" (1982, p. 789). It exists only "when it is put into action" (Foucault, 1982, p. 788). In the article "A Foucauldian Reading of the Global Compact for Migration" (2021), Casasampera claims that Foucault does not view power as a centralised entity exercised by elites, but rather as a force that permeates all levels of society and manifests in various institutional and discursive forms. Additionally, the term 'governmentality' refers to a mode of study that emphasises the strategies and information that support efforts to influence individual and social behaviour in many contexts (Walters, 2012, p.30). To govern is 'to structure the possible fields of action' through a multifaceted collaboration of institutions, methods, investigations and reflections, strategies and calculations (Foucault, 1982, p. 790). It is called "the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed" (Foucault, 1982, p. 790). It is essentially connected to the "exercise of power–power as governmentality, or governmentality as the exercise of power" (Casasampera, 2012, p. 2). Though this is only a destructive power. To comprehend the" governmentality as a conduct of conduct", as the action of "(self) conducting an individual's behavior and relationality", highlights the intrinsic possibility of "resistance or counter-conduct" (Foucault, 2009, p. 195). This complicates the question of control. The spatial dimensions of power are described by Willaert's definition of governmentality. This term refers to both the ensemble of practices and schemes of power exercised over the population and the preeminence of a conceptualization of power as the government of the population (Willaert, 2013, p. 151). This study employs Foucauldian discourse analysis to examine the novel Exit West, deconstructing the discursive forms surrounding violence against migrants.

Existing studies have analyzed *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid through different lenses. According to Aroosa Kanwal, post-9/11 fiction disregards social variances and regiments the Muslims worldwide. She deliberates beyond 9/11 because the tense relationship between Islam and the West redefines home and identity and shapes Muslim identity among the diaspora. She links the post-9/11 expression with stereotypes of Muslims, Islam, and Pakistan as an epicentre of terrorism. A "shift from orientalist epistemology to terrorist ontology" (Kanwal, 2015, p. 3) occurred when the US and the West decided to target Muslims instead of Blacks or Easterners. Kakutani Michiko asserts that due to the stereotypical portrayal in the novel as "others" or security risks, "with political crises, warp-speed technological changes, [which] grow tensions between nativists and migrants threatening to upend millions of lives" (Michiko, 2017). Sukhdev Sandhu claims that the use of doors as portals represents migration's defiance against entrenched power relations as migrants "having been fresh transplanted to tough new terrains" (Sandhu, 2018). This also reflects the role of the state in sustaining racism and xenophobia through its laws and practices.

In the article "Black Holes in the Fabric of the Nation: Refugees in Hamid's *Exit West*," Michael Perfect notes that *Exit West* was published following the announcement of a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees report that noted the number of migrants had peaked in 2014. This novel reflects both the political upheavals and the tragic experiences of refugees. The displacement of refugees symbolizes mobility across historical periods (Perfect 2019, p. 1). The refugees are described as a sizable crowd whose identities are hazy. The syntax of the narration demonstrates subordination because refugees are always defined in the subordinate clause (Perfect 2019, p. 4). Because they are denied access to their own country, people are forced to question the concept of nationality and lose their rights and refuge. The novel also captures the key political and social challenges, as well as the individualistic fight for "fulfilment, space, and self against the odds" (Shamsie, 2017). So, the world Hamid depicts is a dystopian and near-future society.

Sophie Gilbert notes, "*Exit West* is a story about how familiar and persistent human existence is, even at the edge of dystopia" (2017). The novel echoes the core themes of societal breakdown and disillusionment by depicting a world of bloodshed and displacement, as it "maps the breakdown of a society, and how effortlessly the cycle begins to repeat itself" (Gilbert, 2017). The novel creates a dangerous and uncertain dystopian world through the eyes of its protagonists, Saeed and Nadia. The novel demonstrates the dilemma of refugees to illustrate the dystopian idea, and "paradoxical—the physical journey from one land to another is, for most refugees, the most dangerous and traumatic part" (Gilbert, 2017). In the novel, the mystical doors serve as symbols of authority, representing the spatial control mechanisms. These doors "add a sense of magical realism" (Gilbert, 2017) and subvert the established order of space, posing a challenge to governmental power and border control systems. Lastly, this literature review has examined how existing studies overlook the fact that Foucauldian discourse analysis can be employed to deconstruct the representation of dystopian migration in *Exit West*. By engaging with this theoretical framework, scholars can gain a deeper understanding of how language influences the discussion of violence and power in relation to migrants. This research examines *Exit West* from the angle of migrants' subjectivity, particularly in connection to Foucault's concept of governmentality, power structures, surveillance, and violence.

Discussion

The dystopian migration discourse is one of the current issues being discussed in literature because of its multiculturalism and racism. Today, the migrants are considered as colonists and the host countries are as colonialists. This colonialism causes the migrants to suffer an identity crisis, racial disharmony and global violence. These critical issues make the migrants' journey dystopian. This research paper argues that *Exit West* is a dystopian narrative that explores the transformation of migrant subjectivity. The novel revolves around the migrants who migrate from one country to another through magical doors. When the protagonists of the novel, Nadia and Saeed, learn about these doors, they want to cross the borders because of the government's fights and curfews in their country. These doors offer them an escape from the national conflicts but "mock the desires of those who desired to go far away" (Hamid, 2017, p. 52). The migrants are drawn to the appealing opportunities and dream of better lives. However, Hamid speaks up about the reality of traditional migration by calling migrants' dreams "dreams of fools" (Hamid, 2017, p. 52). Here, the author ironically tells the dangers behind these doors. He urges readers to consider the cruelties of crossing the border. This research paper argues that these magical doors initially captivate migrants, but then trap them within the power network of host countries. In "Subject and Power", Foucault states that power is exercised over "free subjects, and only insofar as they are free" (p. 790). This means these subjects are no longer free and become docile bodies when trapped in a control mechanism. Similarly, migrants themselves are entangled in the power structures of host countries when crossing borders. As a result, they are no longer free and are subject to the power dynamics of host countries. This condition causes the transformation of the migrant's self and subjectivity in the 21st century.

The word 'subjectivity' was used in 1803 in the Edinburgh Review. This term means "the quality, state, or nature of being" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2025). It highlights the well-being of an individual

in society. In the context of dystopian migration discourse, the term explains the conditions of migrants in the controlling places. The places mentioned in the *Exit West* uphold a systematic process of control and dehumanization that migrants lose their sense of self and are subjectified under persistent physical and psychological domination through media, the military, and language. The migrants have "witnessed massacres in the streets, militant shooting unarmed people and then disappearing" (Hamid, 2017, p. 64). Hamid uses the words 'unarmed people' instead of 'migrants'. This means that migrants, as unarmed people, are powerless, and the military is in power as it has weapons. Here, the word 'unarmed' is an icon of colonial power. Additionally, migrants are desperate to migrate. The "fear" in their eyes is to know that "they would be trapped here forever" (Hamid, 2017, p. 77). In the light of Foucault's point of view, it is the "fear of punishment" (1977, p. 238). The migrants know that if they do anything without the consent of the host country, they will be punished. Due to this, their "manners and ways and habits were undergoing considerable change" (Hamid, 2017, p. 117). This demonstrates that migrants undergo significant changes in their activities due to the influence of authoritative places.

This study also argues that the places mentioned in *Exit West* are crucial to understanding their purposes as they remind both of terror and supremacy. Flynn claims that the contemporary era is "the epoch of space". In Foucauldian discourse analysis, heterotopias are a "constant of every human group and include spaces like 'spaces' of colonies" (Flynn, 2018, p. 169). The landscapes in *Exit West*, such as the unnamed city, Mykonos, London, and Marin, illustrate the "geopolitics of the region" (Flynn, 2018, p. 170) to understand the hegemonic structures of colonial power. Foucault also asserts that to exercise power through government "is to structure the possible fields of action of other people" (1982, p. 790). In "Governmentality", Foucault describes governmentality as "the conduct of conduct" or "the art of government" (1991, p. 220-1), where "government" refers to a broad spectrum of methods of control that make subjects governable. Similarly, every military group, native power, and governmental power seems to suppress the migrants in the colonial places mentioned in the novel. Political power is the formal way of controlling others for political gains. The state's efforts to govern movement and maintain order reflect its power and governmentality, which involve the management of life and the regulation of populations. Supremacies for the sake of political control make migrants victims measly. When extremists seize the stock exchange in an *unnamed city*, the government responds with countermeasures that have catastrophic effects, disrupting peaceful activities. The people are "deprived of the portals" and feel "marooned and alone and much more afraid" because the government decides on anti-terrorism measures that "Internet connectivity [is] suspended" (Hamid, 2017, p. 37). Through the constant bloodshed, severe bombs and curfews, "authorities perhaps wishing to signal that they were in such complete control" (Hamid, 2017, p. 29), protagonists eventually decide to leave their worn-torn country, as being "at the edge of the abyss" (Hamid, 2017, p. 7). *Political power structures* play a significant role in impacting the choices and lives of the characters. The protagonists, Nadia and Saeed, must find a way out of their oppressive home nation and find a place to live without worrying about danger. To escape the country's death trap, Nadia and Saeed are driven to investigate the mysterious doors.

Foucault's theory of 'the conduct of conduct' becomes intense when the migrants modify their behaviour to obey the conventions and laws. On the *Greek island of Mykonos*, they face the challenge of learning the "languages of the world" (Hamid, 2017, p. 62), understanding cultural norms, and following different sets of rules. This means that migrants do not live according to their choices but according to the instructions and regulations of host countries. They encounter social dynamics and hierarchies as they travel through different places, including problems with class, race, and religion. These *social power structures* demonstrate how the migrants are received and treated in different landscapes. Everywhere they face oppression and difficulties "with no food... with moments of tension, with tension ebbing and flowing...electricity went out, ... murders and rapes and assaults as well" (Hamid, 2017, pp. 78-85). By presenting their ability to manage the "electricity network", which is "cut off by the authorities" (Hamid, 2017, p. 83), the dominant class metaphorically holds power away from a vulnerable group through these power outages in *Dark London*. In dystopian London, the governing groups treat migrants

as subjects, not permitting them to settle down anywhere in the city. Due to this, Hamid satirically calls London '*Dark London'* because of its inability to treat the migrants as human beings.

This research paper also argues that power is exercised differently in the contemporary era. It is constantly exercised through *digital surveillance* today. Intensifying surveillance of migrants raises important questions about human rights, privacy, and the potential influence on their well-being and ability to integrate into host countries. An important surveillance theorist defines surveillance as "the focused, systematic and routine attention to personal details for purposes of influence, management, protection or direction" (Lyon, 2007, p. 14). However, Haggerty and Ericson state that surveillance is "the collection and analysis of information about populations to govern their activities" (2000, p.3). Although surveillance is an ancient social method, it has become a primary governing exercise of late modernism over the last forty years (Ball, Haggerty, and Lyon 2012, p. 4). *Panopticon* is a prison design in which prisoners can be observed at any time without knowing when they are being watched, and it "presents a cruel, ingenious cage" (Foucault, 1977, p. 205). The depiction of border control through surveillance in *Exit West* echoes Foucault's concept of the Panopticon.

Surveillance cameras are prevalent in the novel, especially in areas where migrants are congregated, such as refugee camps and border crossings. This research argues that authoritative host countries employ drone cameras as tools of control to monitor migrants and limit their freedom of movement. These drones serve as symbols of surveillance and the impact of modern technology on the lives of the migrants. Because of the power dynamics in the borderlands, the migrants are constantly feeling fidgety for "terror and thought that anything could happen" (Hamid, 2017, p. 64) and fear of being detected. Foucault notes that the panopticon is "the perfect disciplinary apparatus would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly ... a perfect eye that nothing would escape" (1977, p. 173). Lyon also states that we cannot escape from the Panopticon, either historically, or scrutiny of surveillance in today's world (2006, p. 4). Similarly, these drone cameras serve as surveillance machines that brutally record by demonstrating the degradation of migrants in London. The migrants are constantly watched, "On a security camera, the family could be seen... picked up again by a second camera" (Hamid, 2017, pp. 54, 55), revealing the power dynamics in their lives. The powerful authorities of the host country track the family by camera. In London, "as drones and helicopters and surveillance balloons prowled intermittently overhead" (Hamid, 2017, p. 86), and in Marin, a tiny drone that keeps an eye on them, "not larger than a hummingbird", is designed to be unremarkable in their lives. The constant surveillance is seen to act as a control mechanism.

This research also argues that surveillance creates a persistent feeling of vulnerability and self-surveillance in migrants. As the power mechanism of surveillance applies to the body and its actions within a disciplinary framework (Foucault, 1977, p. 11). However, when it comes to the individualized body, surveillance functions more wisely as a technology of power. It is well said that today's camera surveillance highlights that some are watching others' behavior, which decreases the chances of cheating and increases social acceptance (Jansen et al., 2018, p. 4). It is effective due to an ever-increasing practice of 'watching and being watched' channels done by several latest ICT technologies. Therefore, the fear of being watched can be profoundly traumatic for those who feel they are under scrutiny. The migrants modify their behavior, speech, and dealings with others, "careful to keep their distance" (Hamid, 2017, p. 66), knowing their activities are being examined. This adaptation is a survival strategy in a violent and controlled society.

Violence is defined by the World Health Organization in WRVH as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation" (Rutherford et al., 2007). While Oksala understands violence as "intentional bodily harm" (2012, p. 9). For Foucault, power can and often does include the use of violence, as he points out that power relations do not "exclude the use of violence any more than it does the obtaining of consent; no doubt the exercise of power can never do without one or the other, often both at the same time" (1982, p. 789). According to Foucault, power is not incompatible with violence; on the contrary, it frequently entails it. This research argues that shootings, gunfights, and massacres are used as tools of control and punishment in *Exit West*. They

help to establish supremacy and reinforce the power of those imposing the violence. The novel begins in an unnamed city "swollen by refugees" (Hamid, 2017, p. 7) on the edge of civil war, and the city has yet to experience "any major fighting, just some shootings, and bombing" (Hamid, 2017, p. 7). The state exerts control over the population, and this control includes not only physical violence but also the manipulation of migrants' lives, highlighting the aspects of biopolitical power. As Foucault argues, "the State can only operate on the basis of other, already existing power relations. The State is superstructural in relation to a whole series of power networks" (Foucault, 1980, p. 122). The migration of protagonists is a response to the threat imposed by state violence. It also demonstrates how the actions of the state have a significant influence on individuals' lives, compelling them to engage in activities that are often challenging.

This research paper also argues that the manifestations of physical violence highlight the dominant themes of power, control, and the bitter realities faced by migrants in different landscapes. Shootings in Mykonos, "when bullets are fired into an unarmed mass of people" (Hamid, 2017, p. 66), represent the ultimate display of authority and power, with individuals armed with weapons having the ability to take a life. The violence they face in their homeland is a driving force behind their need to seek safety elsewhere. The governments and armed groups contribute to the displacement of individuals. This highlights that violence becomes a catalyst for migration and how governments indirectly shape the movements of their citizens through such means. The migrants are "referred to as mousetraps" (Hamid, 2017, p. 68), confronted with the threat of gunfire and bloodshed. In the light of Foucault's point of view, these scenes demonstrate the historical violence where criminals must be "subjected to physical pain" (1977, p. 105). Because of the illegal migration, migrants are presented as criminals. So, Hamid uses these magical doors as metaphors for illegal migration, which allows the migrants to cross borders. He tells about the threats of illegal migration through the use of fictional doors.

This research also argues that violence is employed to create social divisions within the communities of migrants and nativists. For example, the conflict in an unnamed city leads to the emergence of sectarian violence and divisions based on religious boundaries. This not only highlights how violence can be used as a tool of governmentality but also its role in shaping societal structures. In London, natives are in power when the "street was under attack by nativist mob ... with irons bars or knives" (Hamid, 2017, p. 79). Migrants as powerless subjects suffer physical violence when the "eye was bruised... lip was split and kept bleeding... three lives were lost" (Hamid, 2017, p. 79). However, in Marin, the migrants experience silent domination, non-interfering, pleasing the scene of the sea. The atmosphere varies from the landscapes in the novel because it supports the influx of refugees, as "Marin was less violent than most of the places" (Hamid, 2017, p. 112). These incidents show how migrants are treated by varying degrees of acceptance or rejection in different host countries.

Conflicts are characteristics of the broader discourse of violence. The research also states that migrants deal with both external conflicts and internal conflicts. For instance, Nadia with "her animal form, ... losing her balance, or possibly her mind" (Hamid, 2017, p. 91) due to the scene of wholesale slaughter advocated by nativists in London. This shows that migrants' mental health is disturbed due to depression and paranoia. They feel a constant sense of being under violence, impacting their physical well-being. On the other side, Saeed receives the news of his father's death, and he does not know "how to mourn, how to express his remorse, from so great a distance" (Hamid, 2017, p. 100). These scenes demonstrate that protagonists are deeply affected by the scattering of their 'extended family", "friends and acquaintances... the loss of a home" (Hamid, 2017, p. 56). Deprived of a home, migrants lose their privileges and shelters, and family affection. These circumstances raise questions about their nationality. The negotiation of self in different locations illustrates the influence of power structures on how migrants perceive themselves and how they are perceived by others. These doors also serve as portals to alternative spaces, disturbing the conventional ideologies of borders and challenging established power structures. The doors become sites of resistance and revolution for migrants.

Exit West emphasizes individual agency despite the prevalent impact of external power structures. By demonstrating a kind of resistance against authorities,

Nadia and Saeed's decisions reveal their desire for independence and control over their lives. As Foucault claims, "Where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). It means that resistance is directly proportional to power relations. In this context, resistance shows that migrants express their will, challenging the idea of submissiveness and compliance. In *Exit West*, the government crushes the militants' resistance, and the ensuing civil war highlights the ideological collisions between different social groups and the Islamic state. In the novel, Nadia is "single" and rejects the norms of society, including family, religion, and customs. She has doubts about the religious fervor with which she was raised. Riding a motorcycle, having a job at an insurance company and hanging out with Saeed at cafes and her apartment while using weed all constitute acts of defiance against Islamic religious society. Change is "exciting to her", and she enjoys deconstructive Islamic customs for always trusting "her instincts about situations" (Hamid, 2017, p. 17). There are distinctions in how Nadia and Saeed show resistance. Nadia fights back against the Islamic rhetoric she has been raised with, while Saeed resists the cultural practices of foreigners.

This research also argues that resistance is not always efficacious as migrants encounter penalties for their actions. As Foucault claims, "Power is everywhere: not that it engulfs everything, but that it comes from everywhere" (Foucault, 1978, p. 93). Power is unlimited and omnipresent. This *omnipresence of power* is prevalent in the novel, where power is not always easily toppled, and resistance meets with even more control and violence. Migrants encounter systems of power that control their movement, monitor their actions, and impose submission. The efficacy of resistance can be curtailed by the vigorous response from powerful authorities. For instance, migrants are "monkeys ... have lost respect for what they are born of" (Hamid, 2017, p. 82), and they are always "in a state of siege, and liable to be attacked by government at any time" (Hamid, 2017, p. 87). This depiction of resistance as encountering more control and violence shows power structures and the consequences of challenging conventional authority.

Conclusion

The subjective state of migrants is being changed during their migration journey. This study elucidates the intricate interaction between surveillance, physical violence, and resistance in the experiences of migrants in *Exit West*. It has analyzed the long-lasting influence of power structures and control mechanisms on the migrants' lives in the dystopian host countries. The illustrations of physical violence, such as beatings, shootings, and fights, serve as methods of dominance to maintain the existing power relations. Those in positions of power utilize violence as a means to uphold their control and suppress migrant's resistance. The migrants' lives are shaped not only by the severe physical violence but also by the enduring trauma and psychological impacts. The migrants resist the power dynamics but face more control and violence. They confront the restrictions of their ability to act freely in their dystopian migration journey. This reveals that the monitoring and antagonism of authoritative states influence the constant struggle for freedom. This condition highlights that migrants are striving to find a place to call their home in the 21st century.

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