

PSYCHOLOGICAL FRAGMENTATION AND SEMIOTIC RECONSTRUCTION: DIASPORIC IDENTITY IN HAMID'S DISCONTENT AND ITS CIVILIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the intertwined thematic concerns of dislocation and identity in Mohsin Hamid's *Discontent and Its Civilizations: Dispatches from Lahore, New York and London* (2014), a relatively under-explored text in the domains of contemporary post-colonial and semiotic interrelation. The research is conducted under the lens of Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic framework of Semiotics (Peirce, 1931–1958). By employing Peircean triad (representamen-object- interpretant), this paper aims to find out how Hamid articulates his dislocated identity which has been constructed and configured by language, memory and geopolitical realities. The interrogation gets further deepened by the methodological application by Mohammad Bagher Aghaei, the schema which contextualizes Peircean Semiotics within the broader paradigm of subjectivity constituted through cultural hybridity (Aghaei, 2015). Hamid's essayistic reflections are manifested as textual site of signification that encode cultural displacement, diasporic trajectories and, cultural and ideological disjunction between East and West. While rendering the fragmented self, torn between belonging and estrangement, Hamid becomes both the subject and the interpreter of his own semiotic ecology. The presence of semiotic approaches make the analysis contribute to the discourse on transnational identity formation, foregrounding the importance of having critical semiotic awareness to understand the fractured self within postcolonial and global contexts.

KEYWORDS: Dislocation; Psychological Fragmentation; Cultural hybridity ; Diasporic Trajectories; Semiotic Ecology.

INTRODUCTION

The present study reviews Mohsin Hamid's work and evaluates his discursive representations through the lens of narrative structure and symbolism, elucidating the dislocated selfhood by unfolding the densely patterned layers. Through these interwoven layers the themes of dislocation and identity stem out. The investigation highlights the maneuvering of a fragmented self by Hamid, specifically the contradictions between individual belonging and social demands, tradition and development, and the struggle of agency in a constantly changing environment. The persuasive reflection on the complexity of human living in the changing global landscapes presented in the monograph *Discontent and Its Civilizations: Dispatches from Lahore, New York and London* (2014) is based on the premise that the personal identity is subject to regular reconstruction through the interaction of modernity, tradition, and migration. In the realm of contemporary literature, the work of Mohsin Hamid, a Pakistani writer and novelist, distinguishes itself for its fine grained and multifaceted exploration of dislocation, broken self and identity. Hamid has been penning down cultural and socio-political upheavals and the fractures within the self caused by them. His two highly regarded depictions, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) and *Exit West* (2017) showcased incisive analysis of

identity and assimilation by conducting an examination on the impact created by the global politics through the eye of a Pakistani protagonist in post 9/11 America. The novel was in the nomination list of prestigious Man Booker Prize. There is a powerful depiction of alienation and internal conflict that every individual, straddling with multiple identities experience, blending realism with magical elements to portray the fluidity between the borders and the universal quest for belonging. The study embraces Peirce's foundational triadic semiotic model alongside the methodological lens of Mohammad Bagher Aghaei to examine the contribution of signs and symbols towards the construction of the self within a globalized landscape.

Semiotics is derived from the Greek word *semeiōtikos* which mean the study of signs. The sphere examines the functions and interpretations of signs. It incorporates both linguistic and non-linguistic signs to explore how meaning is created and communicated. The notion of Semiotics traces back to the 17th century when in 1690, in all modern sense, the English philosopher John Locke first used the term (Locke, 1690/1975). However, later it resulted in an established academic discipline. This evolution was strongly related to structuralism, a theoretical framework for examining linguistic and cultural processes. Between 1906 and 1911, the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, a key player in structuralist philosophy, developed his theories that elucidated the connection between signifiers, signified, and signs (Saussure, 1916/1966). In the meantime, the study of meaning-making outside linguistic structures was expanded by the triadic model of signs put forth by American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. From the 1860s until his death in 1914, he worked on semiotics. By introducing a triadic model that highlighted the dynamic and interpretative character of meaning-making, he expanded the field of semiotics (Peirce, 1931–1958).

The semiotic theory by Peirce introduced three fundamental constituents: the representamen, the object and finally the interpretant. The object is the entity the sign refers to, the meaning generated in interpreters mind is the interpretant and the representamen is the sign itself. Contrary to the binary system of Saussure theory, Peirce's semiotic signification system lays bare the semantic production operating as a sustained process. Hence meaning does not appear to be a fixed entity rather continuously shaped and reshaped by multiple individual and cultural perspectives. For the modern semiotic theory, Peirce's scholarly and substantive contributions establish the epistemological basis thereby rendering this framework significant and particularly instrumental for analyzing texts and penetrating into symbols and diverse cultural expressions. Peirce's triadic framework has been deployed extensively to numerous fields, literature and aesthetics are two of the examples. Peirce outlines that the semiotics facilitates the execution of signs and within this process the triadic relational interaction of representamen with object produces an interpretant. Peirce designed semiotic in such a way that it enhances the interpretive and dynamic character of meaning by structuring an holistic analytical framework making the analysis of text and symbols incredibly sharpen.

Aghaei's (2015) critical involvement with Peirce's semiotics serves as foundational framework in literary discourse and understanding the role of signification. He extended Peirce's triadic model of sign, object, and interpretant, a semiotic triad utilized for the scrutiny of meaning in literary texts. Notwithstanding the current study has its theoretical ground in Peirce's semiotic paradigm, it employs Aghaei's methodological discussion of Peircean semiotics principles to literary criticism. Aghaei clarifies the analytical deployment of the Peirce triad by illustrating that there is an intricate semiotic system comprising of literary texts where meaning transpires by means of a continuous mechanism of semiosis. There is no fixed signification. Situated within this theoretical paradigm, the representamen embodies the textual sign, the object indexes the conceptual or experiential referent and owing to the realization of meaning through cultural and conceptual understanding, the interpretant embodies that meaning. This approach is significantly relevant to Hamid's narratives, when we see the identity, migration, and dislocation intersect with linguistic and symbolic representation. Viewing Hamid's reflective essays through the lens of semiotic triad, the broken selves and fractured identity demonstrate themselves, configured by hybridity and socio-political. The phenomenon allowed a nuanced interpretation of diasporic experiences of migration and exile along with cultural complexity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dislocation, has been a major theme in contemporary literature, both physical and psychological, particularly in the scenario of migration and globalization. Recent studies, such as Savenson's (2024) work on "Chronotopes of Home and Dislocation: Recognizing the Lived Experiences of Refugees", highlights the ways narratives of home and dislocation are constructed by individuals during qualitative research interviews, pointing out the ongoing settlement of belonging amidst forced relocation. Similarly, Varvogli (2023) in *Travel and Dislocation in Contemporary American Fiction* explores how dislocation reshapes cultural identity and concepts of citizenship by providing the insights that harmonically resonate with Hamid's immersion with transnational identity. Klopff and Naber (2023) in their recent article "Dislocation: Toward a Framework for the Study of Crises", identify how identities become fragmented when powerful societal narratives are derailed. This corresponds with Hall's (1996) perspective that identities are constructed through, not outside, difference. This entails the radically disturbing recognition that it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, that the positive meaning of any term and thus its

“identity can be constructed” (Hall, 1996, p. 4). Furthermore, Hamid’s introspection on his own experiences of displacement amplifies the stressful situation between rootedness and mobility.

In “Migration and Identity in Mohsin Hamid’s *Exit West*”, Durrani (2018) analyses the novel’s depiction of migration as both a physical process of journey and a metaphorical representation for personal and collective transformation. She examines how traditional narratives of displacement are challenged by Hamid by employing magical realism, through the portrayal of mysterious doors that enable characters to move across the borders effortlessly. The article discusses the symbolic representation of doors to show the fluidity of identity in the globalized world. While Durrani’s primary focus is to explore migration as a metamorphic journey and the fluidity of identity observed through the lens of magical realism, the current work, explores an entire new different dimension of Hamid’s themes. Building on Bhabha’s (1994) interpretive formulation of cultural amalgamation, Brennan (2006) and Gikandi (2011) noted how hybrid identities are negotiated by the rhetoric of displacement and rootlessness. This diasporic synthesis is echoed by Hamid’s essays, encoding a disjointed fragmented self which is fractured yet perpetually evolving. Giddens (1991) argues that person with a relatively stable sense of individual identity has a perception of biographical coherence which he is capable of grasping reflexively and, to varying degrees, convey to other people. In the situations of late modernity, individuals live in the world with a different sense than that of previous eras of history. Every individual still remains engaged in living a local life, and bodily constraints make sure that at every instant, all the individuals are situated contextually in time and space. He further describes that in the world of late modernity there are numerous pronounced tensions and difficulties with respect to the self. This pressure compels individuals to position themselves between continuity and change in constructing their sense of self. Said (2000) terms the “contrapuntal consciousness,” as an experience of displacement where individuals exist between cultures, negotiating multiple identities (p. 148). Hamid’s work, particularly *Discontent* and *Its Civilizations* is a reflection of his own experiences and aligns these ideas by writing down his tale of living between Pakistan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The role of language in shaping identity is very critical within it and several theorists and other literary works have highlighted its crucial capacity. Identity is not a fixed spirit or a fixed entity, it is dynamic and altered through linguistic, cultural and social interactions. Through the work of Hamid, this paper will examine the changing concepts of the self and the belonging, as well as the thoughts reflected by literary stories. The essays by Hamid are an opaque demonstration of the way in which language reflects the status of a person who is in the intercultural position. His essays are alternating personal expressions, political representations, and cultural analysis as it shows the disjointed self. Occasionally, the work done by Hamid has been examined in the wider context of diaspora and cross border transnational studies. Across these studies, his narration was seen as the theories of hybridity, fluid identity, and global migration. His dissection is similar to that of Bhabha’s (1994) impression of the “third space” where in there is continuous negotiation on identities (p. 56). Using literature as a representation of identity, Cobley (2001) highlighted that personhood is also made dynamically on the basis of choices made in the narrative. It is compatible with the notion of the interpretant used by Peirce, which explains how meaning is constituted in the context of a continuous reinterpretation process.

Mukherjee’s works, including *Desirable Daughters* (2002), *The Holder of the World* (1993) and *Jasmine* (1989), explores the themes of dislocation and identity, especially in the context of immigrant experiences in South Asia and in North America. The protagonists in her narration undergo identity fracture owing to migration and inevitable conflicts between tradition and modernity and that of home and exile. Her characters experience transformations that question and challenge fixed notions of identity, conforming with Hall’s (1996) declaration of identity being fluid. Mukherjee’s narrative technique also integrates with semiotics, as her use of signs, symbols and recurring motifs draw the attention to the fragmented nature of immigrant identity and reconstruction through cultural and historical processes. She explains that identity is not an intrinsic or stable entity but is constructed through constant engagement with cultural narratives and representations.

Cohen (1997) defines diaspora as a condition identified by dispersion, hybridity, and a desire for home. “Contemporary diasporas may be more concerned with the creative, enriching aspects of a syncretism which makes the maintenance of a single ethnic identity less compelling” (p. 129). His work provides a framework for understanding the affect of migration and global interconnectedness on shaping identity and language. Clifford (1994) expands on the theory of diaspora by proposing that mobility and intercultural interactions craft the diasporic identities, “diasporic discourse is about transnational connections, about dwelling-in-displacement, about histories of scattering and regrouping” (p. 306). His work was constructed on the previous debates on displacement, hybridity, and the construction of identities in transnational contexts.

Derrida (1976), in *Of Grammatology*, challenges the notion of stable meanings in language, presenting the argument that identity is constructed through an endless chain of linguistic disputes. He introduces deconstruction, a method for the analyses of texts that exposed meaning to be an unfixed construct, rather constantly deferred through “différance”, a term he uses to describe that meaning is both postponed and differentiated within language. According to him “deconstruction is not a method, and cannot be transformed into one. It is not even an act or an operation. It takes

place, it is an event that does not await the deliberation, consciousness, or organization of a subject” (p. 24). Derrida (1976) dismisses the traditional preference of speech over writing and advocated that all versions of language are unstable and open to reinterpretation. Going by this, identity is never fully complete, devised by the shifting interpretations of verbals and cultural symbols conditioned by language and interpretation. Whether viewing it through Hamid’s transnational perspectives, Mukherjee’s immigrant narratives, Hall’s (1996) cultural identity theories, Bhabha’s (1994) third space of hybridity, Derrida’s (1976) deconstruction of meaning, or Bakhtin’s (1981) concept of heteroglossia, identity is portrayed as fluid, continuously evolving, and deeply intertwined with language.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current work draws on the qualitative-interpretative research methodology anchored in semiotic literary analysis to investigate the construction and articulation of identity, fragmented and dislocated. The examination in text-based and theoretical, emerging from the conceptual basis that literary texts function as a system of semiotic within which the signs generate the meanings influenced by historical, cultural and subjective matrix. Therefore, Hamid’s essays are addressed both as autobiographical reflection and semiotically inflected narratives. These reflections and narratives encode the experiences of displacement and identity negotiation along with hybridity with the diasporic spaces.

The theoretical framework is predominately guided by Charles Sanders Peirce’s triadic model of semiotics, the model theorizes the process signification through the interplay of representamen, the object, and the interpretant (Peirce, 1931–1958). This framework is well fitting for the current investigation particularly because the dynamic and interpretative nature of meaning-making is accentuated through the implementation of triad which eventually allows identity to be perceived as persistently re-calibrated instead of being fixed. This orientation facilitates the rigorous analysis of the ways metaphors, spatial imagery lexical-discursive choices and structural patterns of narration in Hamid’s essays operate as mediator signs for dislocation and belonging. The study integrated Mohammad Bagher Aghaei’s methodological orientation to situate Peirce’s semiotics into literary discourse, contextualizing semiotic meaning in lived experience and hybrid cultural formation (Aghaei, 2015). By means of Aghaei’s standpoint, interpretant is allowed to be conceived as culturally inscribed and arising from the author’s diasporic framing as distant from de-contextualized sign relations alone.

The primary corpus of the research are the selected essays from *Discontent and Its Civilizations*, particularly the ones with the themes of language loss, aesthetic and artistic expression, dislocation and recovery. The systemic close reading has been done to the text for the identification of recurring narrative patterns and symbolic elements that encode identity fracture and uprooting. The Peircean triad is utilized to break down each selected textual instance to delineate the semiotic functioning of signs within specific narratives and sociocultural context and to see how the meaning is emerged through Hamid’s critical self and interpretive reflexivity along with his trans-cultural experiences.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Dislocation is tracked as one of the conspicuous themes in Mohsin Hamid’s *Discontent and Its Civilizations*. Across his essays in the book, Hamid contemplates the identity, belonging and the crucial impact on self, invited by the migration and displacement. His compositions, which are based on firsthand encounters and broad ranging cultural observations, resonate strongly with the discussions revolving around identity, belonging, and hybridity in today’s far modernized and globalized world.

CULTURAL DISLOCATION

Cultural dislocation has been trailed periodically by Hamid in the collection of essays at various places and observed to be a dominant factor in the *Life* section of Hamid’s essays. Through his insightful narration on migration and adaptation, he unfolds the conflict of identity, the emotional disputes associated with the loss of language and the mechanism of locating oneself in overlapping and conjoining cultural landscapes. By implementing Peirce’s triad, there has been a vivid portrayal of how dislocation is maneuvered and at times deciphered through symbolic narratives. In “Once upon a life”, Hamid depicts his childhood movement to California, where he eventually lost his connection to his native language Urdu. He writes, “It’s a funny thing to lose your first language. I didn’t speak for a month...and when I next spoke, it was in English, in complete sentences, and with an American accent” (Hamid, 2014, p.17). The language shift in this particular excerpt illustrates his movement from speaking Urdu to familiarizing with and adopting English as now his principal language. Hamid’s experience of having a linguistic and cultural distance from his roots when he had to move to a new environment surfaces as signified reality. The revelation has been made by interpretant that the poignant symbol of segregation from one’s heritage along with the necessity of existence undoubtedly happens to be language. The month of silence signifies communicative withdrawal, showing how identity is negotiated through absence of speech. The shift to “complete sentences” in English suggests an internalized new grammar and phonology, symbolizing not just survival but reconstitution of self. In the essay “Art and the Other

Pakistanis”, Hamid finds relatedness and inspiration in the innovative atmosphere of the National College of Arts (NCA) in Lahore. He reflects, “the art, and artists, I found at NCA ushered me into many more Pakistans: the nascent underground music scenes, the emerging film and television scenes” (Hamid, 2014, p. 22). The dynamic vibrant artistic community at NCA symbolizes as a marker of diversity across Pakistan. The cultural pluralities and that of identities serve as a referent, in contrast to the strict homogeneous unitary representations on behalf of the country in popular narratives, the diversity of identities and cultures which co occur in Pakistan identifies as object in this narrative. To practice reconciliation, art as a conceptual grasp, comes up with an offer of a creative space. Perceived through Aghaei’s (2015) interpretive paradigm, the episode on NCA surfaced as a culturally saturated site, where the hybrid subjectivities have been reconciled, proposing that interpretants do not originate in cultural isolation but are entrenched within the lived experience of interpreter. Thus, it is more than a sign, object, interpretant semiotic replay. In contemporary literature, dislocation often functions as both a thematic concern and a narrative strategy, reflecting the instability of belonging in an interconnected yet divided world. Rushdie (1991, p. 145) and Adichie (2013, p. 212) portray characters, negotiating fractured identities across cultural and national borders. Mohsin Hamid’s essays stand within this tradition, yet they distinguish themselves by amalgamating personal memoir with socio-political commentary, creating a semiotic landscape where dislocation becomes both an individual experience and a critique on global hybridity.

In the essay “A Home for Water Lilies”, Hamid brings in the metaphor of water lilies to describe the experience of immigrants like himself, who are rooted yet adrift. He writes, “We spoke Urdu, cooked mutter keema, danced the bhangra... we had roots. And yet we drifted” (Hamid, 2014, p. 32). Hamid’s life was deeply sculpted by migration. The lexical pairing of “roots” and “drifted” encodes hybridity through contrastive verbs. Linguistically, this juxtaposition semiotically represents migrants’ simultaneous attachment and estrangement: Urdu and cultural practices serve as signifier, while the interpretant reveals identity as a paradox of stability and motion. Born in Lahore, Pakistan, he spent significant parts of his life in the United States and the United Kingdom before returning to Lahore. He developed a unique perspective on cultural hybridity because of this back-and-forth movement between different worlds where the act of being “rooted yet adrift” eventually becomes a personal reality of life. The portrayal of water lilies is the symbolic gesture in this instance which float while still anchored to the ground below. The dual nature of cultural hybridity is the object of the analysis, where migrants while pursuing adaptation to new, often confusing environments, preserve characteristic their cultural heritage. Hamid recounts his personal experiences of migration and the challenges of forging a connection to new places. He narrates his arrival in London, feeling initially out of place but gradually developing a sense of connection through this place’s diversity and openness. The essay “In Concert, No Touching” dramatically describes the sensory submersion he experienced at a Sufi trance event: “Together, we surrendered to it, the wet stroking of our bodies... Beneath us, men whirled in ecstasy” (Hamid, 2014, p. 26). Linguistically, the repeated pronoun “we” and the sensory verbs “surrendered,” “stroking,” and “whirled” encode a collective dissolution of boundaries, creating a tactile lexicon of unity.

Hamid draws attention to a pivotal moment in his literary journey, where he was fully immersed in the rich legacy of Western literature, influenced by both Western and Pakistani influences. At the same time, Hamid embodies Pakistani tradition and cultural narratives, stories that incorporate oral histories, Sufi poetry, Urdu prose, and the imperial genealogy and colonial imprint on of English literature. This contrast, being trained by a major Western literary giant, when he has his roots in the storytelling ethos of Pakistan, represents the two influences shaping his creative identity. In “When Updike Saved Me from Morrison” he goes, “I’d done two semesters of short story work with Joyce Carol Oates...I hoped to be a novelist” (Hamid, 2014, p. 23). The semiotic trace has been manifested by Hamid’s concurrent engagement with the literary traditions of the west and that of his own Pakistani heritage. Hamid employed universal metaphors to analyse the dislocation with respect to its shared aspects. In “Once Upon a Life”, he looks up at the stars, reflecting on their omnipresence: “These were the same stars people over there looked up at” (Hamid, 2014, p. 18). The stars become the metaphoric marker, that signifies a connection which surmounts physical and cultural divisions. Having said that, while stars symbolize comfort and create a sense of universality, they also increase the loneliness of dislocation, owing to the distant and intangible connection between them. In “Once Upon a Life” Mohsin Hamid recalls his memory of sketching maps when he was as a child, in his mind he would picture new nations with hazy boundaries. He writes, “I would create new countries...always mixed, with no clear majority” (Hamid, 2014, p. 19). The sign vehicle is imprinted by the imaginary creation of these fabricated maps, symbolizing a thirst to transcend rigid borders. The contextual ground has been set by Hamid’s visualization of a world that integrates hybridity and fluidity and put the fixed identities aside. Following Aghaei, the interpretant is not the detached mental construct, but a consequence of hybridity, where Hamid’s interactions with artistic and cultural domains substantiate the meaning stemming out from lived peripatetic subjectivity. According to Aghaei, “semiotics principally investigates and explores the production and function of signs and sign systems as well as the methods of their signification” (Aghaei, 2015, p. 24). This consolidates the argument that meaning in Hamid’s essays is not an abstract mental outcome but is produced through ingrained cultural barriers, linguistic shifts, and narrative form.

SPATIAL DISLOCATION

Spatial dislocation in contemporary writing is frequently portrayed as a catalyst for creativity. In *Open City*, Cole (2011) presents Julius's solitary walks through New York reveal how movement through space becomes a way of thinking: "I never tired of the walks, for they were a way of listening, of talking with the city" (p. 6). Similarly, Ondaatje's (1992) in *The English Patient* depicts displacement in war-torn Italy, where fractured identities are imagined as collective: "We are communal histories, communal books. We are not owned or monogamous in our taste or experience" (p. 261). Mohsin Hamid's own essays in *Discontent and Its Civilizations* echo this sentiment, situating belonging across multiple geographies: "I live in Lahore, am married to an artist from the city, and we have two children. But I have also lived for many years in London and New York, and I feel at home there too" (Hamid, 2014, p. 10). The spatial dislocation to be exact is not merely about physical movement, it also delves into the issues of alienation, psychological disturbance, belonging, and the potential possibilities related to creativity that. He was beset by spatial dislocation early in life when he moved between Lahore and California as a very young boy, a mobilization that separated him from his native Urdu language. He writes: "I'd been so fluent in Urdu, and such a talker, that my parents never realized just how completely I'd forgotten the language until we arrived back in Pakistan" (Hamid, 2014, p. 18). The adverbial intensifier "so completely" emphasizes rupture, while the deixis "back in Pakistan" paradoxically marks return as estrangement and denoted by loss of proficiency. It has been observed that in addition to being merely geographical, the dislocation is also profoundly personal, since he finds it challenging to re connect with his individuality within the a settings that is perceived by him both familiar and alien. Hamid's subsequent contemplations on the National College of Arts (NCA) make the art extremely significant in bridging this divide He observes: "The art, and artists, I found at NCA ushered me into many more Pakistans" (Hamid, 2014, p. 22). The intensifier "so completely" denote rupture, while "back in Pakistan" presents return as estrangement and surfaces the erosion of identity through language. The NCA emerges as an aesthetic sign of resilience amid fragmentation, where art resists rigid identities and affirms cultural plurality. From linguistic alienation to cultural reconnection, Hamid shows how creativity fosters belonging and hybrid identity.

Hamid's exploration of the NCA unpacks microcosm of Pakistan's diversity. He writes: "Students of all social classes, and from all parts of Pakistan, attended NCA. The place was a microcosm of Pakistan, but of a creative Pakistan, an alternative to the desiccated Pakistan General Zia had tried to ram down our throats, calligraphy and nudes, work by students with purely formal concerns, and by others for whom art overlapped with politics" (Hamid, 2014, p. 21).

Hamid demonstrates that dislocation can also create unity by way of collective creativity. National College of Arts (NCA) becomes a emblem of opposition to homogeneity and social uniformity that is depicting a Pakistan where there are no social, cultural or religious segmentation so to facilitate the free flow of expression. His encounters with the NCA indicate that identity is not only fragmented, but also interwoven, which is consistent with the opinion of Aghaei (2015) that meaning is achieved through cultural embeddedness and hybrid subjectivity. The lexical set "all social classes... all parts" signals inclusivity through repetition, while "microcosm" condenses plurality into a single metaphor. The sentence rhythmically encodes diversity as resistance to imposed homogeneity. After having overseas academic career, Hamid returned to Pakistan, only to finds himself in the web of multiple cultural influences, that reflects the plurality he observed at the NCA. Hamid gains a passionately intense understanding of hybridity and cohabitation. Hamid notes: "I saw calligraphy and nudes, work by students with purely formal concerns, and by others for whom art overlapped with politics" (Hamid, 2014, p. 21). He learns that dislocation does not only result in fragmentation but can instead foster unity through shared creativity.

NAVIGATING PERSONAL DISLOCATION THROUGH CREATIVITY

Hamid's personal episodes on spatial dislocation are focused on his understanding of art as a reaction to adversity. Ruminating on his return to Lahore in 1993, he goes:

"It was unlike anything I had ever seen... Here people who prayed five times a day and people who escaped from their hostels late at night to disappear on sexual adventures in the city could coexist" (Hamid, 2014, p. 21).

The presence of juxtaposition between the disentangled artistic spaces and the repressive public territories spotlights the cultural and spatial displacement that many people have to go through. According to Hamid, these artistic clusters are the expressive tokens of rebellion and self-manifestation. The subject of reference is signified by this artistic insurgence is the enduring human urge for self-expression, association and correlation. The encounters he had with musicians, authors, and artists manifest a shared tenacity, mutual collaboration and determination to make way to the unfeigned zones while standing in the middle of dislocation. The conceptual reaction, for both Hamid and the reader, is the realization that art is a reaction to its surroundings rather than just a product of them. Hamid's disengagement with artistic domains is not only an individual act of communication but a situational interpretant, where meaning is constructed through the cultural embeddedness of his diasporic condition. Here writing turns into a hybrid subjectivity, a symbolic mediation in which memory, displacement come together to strengthen the identity.

ART AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN IDENTITIES

Hamid's deliberation on art is extended beyond Pakistan. Recalling a trip to Amsterdam with friends from Lahore's art world, he writes:

"On a warm summer night we checked out some galleries and walked along the canals...Nothing could have been more different from where we had all been fifteen years earlier. And nothing could have been more similar, either" (Hamid, 2014, p. 22).

In the light of Aghaei (2015) and the reflection of Hamid on art in Amsterdam, one can observe how the interpretant is generated in a common cultural experience, in the exposure to the memory of the art world of Lahore and the present-day European space. This illustrates that dislocation does not collapse identity, but reconstruct it through the universality of artistic exchange. This passage is the paragon of the universality of artistic association. Identity of experience associated with the interaction with art surpasses geographical and cultural borders and ultimately makes it a Representamen of the global connection and interconnectedness. The one-day trip of Hamid between Lahore and Amsterdam is the spatial dislocation of millions of people in a globalized world and the art is seen as the global force for togetherness in all parts of the world. The metaphor of "crossing the canals" equivalent to Hamid traversing emotional and cultural boundaries thus painting a vision of interconnectedness. The expression illustrates how art empower humans to go beyond the limits of dislocation.

LINGUISTIC DISLOCATION

One of Hamid's most greatest obstacles in *Discontent and Its Civilizations* is language disorientation, which he understands as intrinsically connected to his cultural and geographic upheavals. He addresses how language loss and accommodation can paradoxically restrict self-expression and create new opportunities for exploration in the *Life* section. Peirce's experiences demonstrate the flimsy linkages between language, identity, and belonging when regarded through the lens of his triadic framework. Crossing linguistic boundaries becomes both a hurdle and a source of creative potential in diasporic writing, where this subject of loss and recovery recur. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) underscores the politics of language when he insists: "I believe that my writing in Gikuyu language, a Kenyan language, an African language, is part and parcel of the anti-imperialist struggles of Kenyan and African peoples" (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986, p. 28). Hemon (2013), who began writing in English after emigrating to the United States, describes his linguistic rebirth as "a second life, in which everything had to be re-learned, re-named, re-invented" (p. 72). Lahiri (2016) reflects on her own exile from and return to language as "Italian offered me a new voice, another possibility of expression, another way of being" (p. 85). Similarly, Vuong (2019) captures the generational rift of immigrant tongues: "I am writing because they told me to never start a sentence with because. But I wasn't trying to make a sentence, I was trying to break free" (p. 31). Against this backdrop, Mohsin Hamid's linguistic journey is characterized not by rupture but by balance, as he affirms: "I write in English, but I think in Urdu; both languages are mine, and both shape who I am" (Hamid, 2014, p. 14). This positions him within a strand of contemporary writing that treats multilingualism not as a deficit but as a resource for reshaping identity.

RECONNECTING WITH URDU: BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

Hamid's return to Pakistan marks an effort to reconnect with his first language and, by extension, his cultural roots. He writes:

"Most of my family and classmates in Lahore spoke English, so I didn't need to fall silent this time. I just started picking up Urdu on the go. Eventually, I could tell a joke and sing a song in it, flirt and fight, read a story and take an exam. I could speak it without a foreign accent. But my first language would be a second language for me from then on" (Hamid, 2014, p. 19).

The list of words "joke," "song," "exam" marks regained range of registers, but the concessive "but" shifts the discourse toward loss. The paradoxical clause "first... second" encodes permanent hybridity through grammatical contradiction. In the framework of Peirce's triadic semiotic model, Mohsin Hamid's gradual re-acquisition of Urdu serves as a Representamen, a sign that symbolizes his reconciliation with a fragmented identity. By relearning his first language, he bridges the gap between his past and present, allowing him to embrace his hybrid identity. The Object in this context is the deep and enduring relationship between language and belonging. Language is not just a tool for communication, it holds cultural and emotional significance, shaping one's sense of self. Through Urdu, Hamid reclaims a lost part of his identity, allowing him to navigate his bi-cultural existence with greater ease. This gradual re-acquisition of Urdu becomes a Representamen of reconciliation with his fragmented identity. By relearning his first language, Hamid bridges the divide between his past and present, finding a way to coexist with his hybrid identity. The Object in this context is the enduring connection between language and belonging. Through Urdu, Hamid reclaims a part of his identity that was once lost, allowing him to navigate his bi-cultural existence with greater ease. The dynamic nature of the linguistic fluency is what understood to be the object of the narration here. Hamid's expedition

accentuates the prospects of rebuilding ties with the traditions, culture and linguistic heritage, despite experiencing dislocation. Eventually the resilience of individuality an identity is highlighted in the face of fragmentation. Hamid frequently makes use of metaphorical expressions to grip the emotional and psychological repercussions of linguistic dislocation. In an instance, he breaks down that in his early days California his initial silence was some kind of a retreat: "I didn't speak for a month." This metaphorical representation for silence unfolds the loss of authority, control and identity, since Hamid was struggling to absorb an entirely new cultural and linguistic surroundings. likewise, he elaborates on relearning Urdu "on the go" creates an image of patchwork reconstruction, illustrating the effort required to piece together a fragmented identity.

These choice of words impressively enrich the narrative, allowing readers to empathize with the complexities of linguistic dislocation and its impact on identity (Ahmad, I., & Gul, R. (2021). Examining under Peirce's triadic semiotic framework, Hamid's reflections on linguistic dislocation reveal a nuanced interplay between language, identity, and belonging. Language serves as a Representamen of both disconnection and connection, reflecting the Object of cultural and personal identity in flux. The Interpretant sprung is the understanding that linguistic dislocation, while fragmenting, also offers opportunities for adaptation, resilience, and reconciliation. Hamid's journey from losing Urdu to mastering English and eventually reclaiming his first language illustrates the fluidity of identity in a globalized world. His use of metaphor further deepens this exploration, capturing the emotional and psychological dimensions of linguistic dislocation. Ultimately, Hamid's narrative offers a powerful testament to the enduring relationship between language and selfhood, even amidst the disruptions of dislocation.

CONCLUSION

Hamid's Discontent and its Civilizations touches a very fragile dynamics of dislocation, displacement and identity. The current works presents an in depth and profound insight into the deep psychological and semiotic occurrence along with geopolitical and physical migration. By using Peirce's semiotic triad integrated within Aghaei's conceptual architecture, the qualitative analysis is conducted to the data to show the themes of cultural, spatial and linguistics dislocation and how they persistently shape and reshape the identity and selfhood consoling the fractured self in the process. Peirce's representamen-object-interpretant triad empowers Hamid to have a thorough exploration of broken self, which is contoured by diasporic experiences, linguistics detachment and cultural mixing. The signifying and symbolic functions of language memory and art surfaced as core themes to meticulously understand Hamid's encounters with displacement. It is incredible to witness how the pain and agony of estrangement revolutionize itself into powerful productive force which resulted into reinvention and re-imagination of self an evolving state of being laden with both loss and potentiality. The research employs variety of symbolic and linguistics sign to get to know the fragmented self in the narration. The analysis highlights that how effective and apt the Peircean triad can be proved for understanding the contemporary diasporic literature. In the study the identity is perceived to be an interpretative open ended process, welcoming multiplicity and repels closure. Hamid's Discontent and Its Civilizations shines as a tribute to the power of language and narrative to reflect and transform the lived experiences of dislocation. The interpretive role of signs are foregrounded and a framework is established for the analysis of globalized subjects that construct and communicate self-hood in the context of displacement. In a world which is increasingly marked by movement, hybridity and border-crossings, the perception derived from this study reaffirm the significance of semiotic approaches in unpacking the layered and contingent nature of identity.

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