

Migration in the Era of Technological Globalization in Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* and Muhammad Hanif's *Red Birds*: The Assessment of Defamiliarization

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Abstract

The growing concern of Post-Colonial Literature, from past few decades is upon forced migration, forced disappearances, and consequent refugee crisis. Re-orientation of the process of contemporary enslavement and European expansion in third- world countries is the central objective of this article. The emerging global patterns of migration problematize the individuality of post-colonial objects/subjects, thus sustaining US/THEM dichotomy. I have, therefore, tried to dispel the myth of fair globalization that creates a misapprehension regarding the equal opportunities for all at both national and international level. As the dominant perspective on globalization contradicts with the increasing restrictions on the entry of refugees in Western countries, it questions simultaneously the credibility of security networks. In the light of Victor Shklovsky's concept of "Defamiliarization", I have discussed the present form of Colonized migration by considering Pakistani negotiation of inequality; created by globalization cum Americanization by utilizing contemporary narrative i.e., Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* (2017) and Muhammad Hanif's *Red Birds* (2018). Both novels address the state of refugee enslavement all over the world while highlighting the tensions on borders and the existence of stern translucent boundaries within the nation. The conclusion considers the possible future of migration.

Keywords: Defamiliarization, Globalization, Refugee migration, Technology, Translucent Boundaries.

A border is a very thin and translucent line between two sovereign states; which "are highly contentious zones" as they are different from other spaces and regions, protected and separated by high military fortification and barbed wires. Borders are continually "made and remade, re-bordered and de-bordered, in concert with larger circulations of migration" (Brambilla et al. 3). With the advancements in technology these borders have become more complex and thus the dynamics of mobility between nations have changed. Globalization has created connectivity between people and places. The contemporary migration patterns are interrelated with the ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies). Kofi Annan, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations (2006) in the report *Globalization and interdependence: International Migration and Development* in Section B of the "Forward" *What we are learning* mentions the advancements in technology and its impact on migration as follows;

Owing to the communications and transportation revolution, today's international migrants are, more than ever before, a dynamic human link between cultures, economies and societies. Penny-a-minute phone cards keep migrants in close touch with family and friends at home, ... The Internet and satellite technology allow a constant exchange of news and information between migrants and their home countries. Affordable fares permit more frequent trips home, easing the way for a more fluid, back-and-forth pattern of mobility. ("International migration" 58)

The opportunity of free mobility is unfortunately available for the privileged strata of the world. This connectivity with the privileged and dis-connectivity with the unprivileged and voiceless is the dilemma of modern day globalization. In fact, migration itself is the missing part

of globalization. The barriers and borders have been removed to trade but human flow in case of persecution or conflict is made difficult with time. Literature on globalization of migration, transnationalism, migrant's information networks and third space dynamics deals with narrating the dis-connectivity of unprivileged with the modern global migration pattern. Hamid in *Exit West* depicts the third world country "swollen by refugees" (1) who "had occupied many of the open places in the city, pitching tents in the green belts between roads, erecting lean-tens next to the boundary walls of houses, sleeping rough on pavements and in the margins of streets. Some seemed to be trying to recreate the rhythms of a normal life... a family of four, under a sheet of plastic..." (Hamid 23). Hamid represents the conditions under which the natives of third world countries in crisis are living along with the refugees. The parallel world seems similar for refugees, as the West which has promised once about security and prosperity of its inhabitants despite of their creed and nationality, and claimed multiple times to be a democratic authority, resists them as threats for their nations. When Saeed and Nadia migrate to different places "the fury of nativist advocating wholesale slaughter... struck her because it seemed so familiar, like in her our city" as if only "the faces and buildings had changed but the basic reality of their predicament had not" (156). Frantz Fanon states in *Black Skin, White Masks* that "the real 'Other' for the White man is and will always continue to be the Black man" (20). This is the general behavior of almost all Western countries towards the Non- Western and can easily be traced through various narratives. Both of the considered authors drew the attention of its readers towards inhumane deterioration of the 'Other'.

Therefore in order to universalize this inhumane mess faced by every refugee in every part of the world and criticizing the compartmentalization of universe by the West, Hamid does not give names to the cities and places which are going through this crisis in his narrative. As for the West, these places are defined only by their geographic appearance "it is still a town that houses an apartment with a lemon tree, a place where two people smoke joints and hook up, a place where underground music is played, a place where people pray, and yes a place where people are killed, and parents die. It doesn't matter that it has a name. Its home to these characters. More home than London, Marin, etc." (Hamid 164-165) In an interview to *The New Yorker* on *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, Hamid says "Not having any names in the novel, except for continent names, was a way for me to de-exoticize the context, to see it fresh"(2012, n.p.) this can also be the reason why Hamid do not specify the geographic location. However the reason of Hanif not mentioning the name of country in *Red Birds* is more logical. In the interview by Jai Arjun Singh he expresses, that the reason of not mentioning the specific geographical location is "not to make it abstract" rather he says that since the nations are stuck in war for almost forty years "with a few years' break here and there" (2018, n.p.) and the camps with time transforms into towns and sometimes replaced by another. So due to continuous war their conditions for generations are constant. Supriya Nair in the Book Review entitled *Red Birds: Mohammed Hanif's most sorrowful novel is swallowed up by its grief* briefs about the background and setting of this novel. According to her, after November 11, the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan has highly been bombarded for centuries, a lot of operations were being carried out in order to excavate Taliban from the land of Waziristan. For centuries these border lands were being the battlefields for the Talibans and Americans, the continuity of drone attacks came to an end in 2004 after capturing the leader of Al-qaeda. Niar believes this "Nowhereistan" is the battle field where Hanif's novel is set.

Alternative perception on War is that of power; highlighted by Hamid and Hanif in fiction is that war has more or less become a business for the West, Hanif in this regard argues that the world is stuck in the ideology of “war for the sake of war” (32) however the politics have been changed according to circumstances. Instead of using old methods of capturing land, enslaving people and mass rape, “war has been condensed to carpet-bombing followed by dry rations and craft classes for refugees” (Hanif 32) this theory of modern warfare rationalized by the author as “War is business, no? Or is there more business after war?” (Hanif 54). The character of Major Ellie gives the Western perspective about war, as it is perceived by the politicians, soldiers and civilians in different ways, for the colonel, war is an opportunity to “make up those extra points”. West not only suppresses East but it also internalizes the negativity towards East in the minds of the Westerners. In a way, Hanif questions the legality of war not only by giving authority to refugees to express their problems but also by giving agency to the people who are obliged to follow the orders of European authorities. The opinion of the white foreigner on the hypocrisy of military authorities is of much importance. He questions not only on the ‘desert survival course’ which is of no use in the circumstances in which he was stuck in and the rationale to bomb such a place where the people are exhausted because of “stillness of the place” and “parents moaning for their kids?” (Hanif 106) This exhibits how the existential crisis prevails because of their continuous marginalized status.

The pain of separation from loved ones because of conflict is consistent subject of Post-World Wars literature. However the ways to depict the complexities is varied. This article utilizes Defamiliarization to understand the phenomenon. In the words of Victor Shklovsky Quoted in *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide*; “The technique of art is to make things 'unfamiliar,' to make forms obscure, so as to increase the difficulty and the duration of perception” (Waugh 216). This art technique to defamiliarize and to alienate suggests that our views of certain objects becomes so generalized that we are not able to perceive the same object in a different way. The Russian formalist believes that it is the duty of artist to enhance the perception. De-familiarization or alienation is a technique to make everyday objects unfamiliar “to overcome the automatizations” (Waugh 215). Hamid creates an imagery of “magical doors” for the people who want to escape persecution. Hanif, on the other side, concentrates on the representation of absurdity of War conflict from multiple narrative voices. Among those narrative voices, it is the Dog’s narration that represents the chaos with such depth. The intellectual agency given to a dog can be considered as an alienation effect to “distance the audience from emotional involvement” while focusing on the problems that “demand intellectual solution” (“Alienation effect”).

Hamid presents his perspectives about migration through the changing relationship of Saeed and Nadia. The characterization plays very important role as it sets the implications of globalization on the contemporary world. The psychological impact of hybridization because of globalization can be seen in the characters as Saeed’s beard and Nadia’s robe are not imposed on them because of religion, rather is their personal choices because others “continued to enjoy the luxury of wearing more or less what they wanted to wear, clothing or hair wise” (1). The existence of contradictory identities in terms of fundamental religious practices and liberal approach towards life and politics are the products of globalization and hybridization. For Saeed, the idea of leaving home was disturbing. His relationship with his family is shown strong as compared to Nadia, who despite of having normal childhood and family environment chose to “move out on her own” (12). Moreover, Nadia and Saeed have their own takes on religion and life style. Their relationship develops in the

havocs of falling city but ended in peaceful silence. Hamid has shown the impact of changing environment on their relationship;

Every time a couple moves they begin to see each other differently, for personalities are not a single immutable colour ... So it was with Saeed and Nadia, who found themselves changed in each other's eyes in this new place (186)

Hamid utilizes this change in relationships; either between Saeed and Nadia or between Saeed and his father or both Saeed and Nadia with their city, as an estrangement technique to highlight the impact of war more profoundly. The victims of war are treated and is shown in the narratives more like slaves of circumstances, bound to behave or respond in a particular manner. Hamid and Hanif, both have shown the impact of ongoing refugee crisis on identity, self-hood and bond with loved ones. The bonds that are more highlighted are between Saeed with Nadia, and Saeed with his father in *Exit West* and mother dear with her children in *Red Birds*. For Saeed, the farther he moved "through space and time" (187) from his motherland, the more his connection strengthened with his native country and his father. Even the death of his father, whose news he gets from his cousin through social media, not only confuses him in a sense that he could not figure out "how to mourn... from so great distance" but also detaches him from Nadia, which makes her feel more guilty. The fact which annoys him more is the nature of Nadia, the way migration moved him did not affect Nadia, to Saeed she looks the same as she did in their own country indicating how she manages to deal with the changing circumstances. In their case, relationship chained him to express his conflict. He finds himself unable to communicate with her and she also experiences the same. She easily distances herself from the refugees of her native country and stopped socializing in her language, indulged herself more in communal work and establishes connections with other communities. So the worst effect of the whole process of migration was upon Saeed, besides the loss of his mother and father, is "the death of his ideal self" (Hamid 188) his inability to connect to her beloved. These two characters are the personification of entire refugee community, the author also indicates the difference of perception as "nations was like person with multiple personalities, some insisting on union and some on disintegration" (Hamid 155). The motif of destruction of family life and loss of parent and children can be seen in sharp contrast to Toni Morrison's portrayal of slavery in her fictions. Being a disciple of Toni Morrison, Hamid shown influence of Morrison's ideas and techniques in his writing. For instance, considering *Beloved* (1987) as a standard to understand her literary stance, Morrison depicts remnants of slavery through the disintegration of family unit and death of mother child bond. She believes that "white folks are bad luck" (Morrison 89) Sethe's killing of her infant daughter to save her child from that burden of slavery can be seen in contrast to the decision made by Saeed's father in not moving with them as he considers their future for he believes that "holding on can no longer offer the child protection" (Hamid 92). In both cases, parenthood and choices made by them are concerns of Hamid and Morrison. Sethe's established motherhood by herself in *Beloved* and migration to West to exit western violent attacks in *Exit West* are defiant answers to all devastation. However, Saeed's individual defiance can be seen in his inclination towards religion. Saeed prays "as a lament, as a consolation, and as a hope" (Hamid 202) because he feels that there is no other way left through which he will be able to touch his parents. The difference in the perceptions of Saeed and Nadia towards the chaos happening and their attitudes in dealing with this, forms a gap between them and gradually just as "All over the world people were slipping away from where they had been, Nadia was slipping away from Saeed, and Saeed from Nadia" (211). The theme of broken family is also evidently pertinent in *Red Birds* with varied forms of resistance. The loss of a family member (Bro Ali) impacts differently on all

characters. Mother dear is the only female character representative of this tragedy, who has lost her son and her house and everything that they had. Mutt has described her that she has a good quality, instead of wearing the depression as a “badge of honor” she turns into certain “form of resistance” (Hanif 81). Her constant frustration because of her missing son and crumbled house can be seen in her arguments on unnecessary things and her silence over the tragedy that happened to them. Her younger son Momo head and heart strong “refused to cry” for he believes that those who face tragedies become “teary eyed and cruel” (62). Momo’s being a child character; is made estranged with his distinctive attitude. He has problematized the general assumptions for the helpless children living in refugee camps. The hatred for America is apparent through his language and his bold defiance with the American pilot. He lost his faith in God’s existence and instead of relying on any spiritual help, he utilizes his intellect to deal with the Americans. Father dear, who works for White men in Hanger is the most important character, mostly indulges himself in paperwork, being accused by mother dear and Momo for sending Bro Ali away as an exchange for the security of their house, Mutt believes that he might be the conflicted person as he is unable to decide on which side he is. When their house is bombed, Father Dear considers it as American militants’s mistake. His character can be seen in contrast to Ghazala from *Haider*. She also allies with her enemies to protect her son’s life, similarly Father dear’s reason of “liking White man’s boot” (109) can be for the safety of their house and family. His helplessness can be traced from his frustration to the Major “if you are a father and if you are a fugee, what can you do?” (109). In the last part, when they found Bro Ali in Hanger, the reason behind his detention revealed as he was caught red handed for misguiding the white army officials. The use of technology in destruction of the *Other* and construction of the West is made de-familiar for the readers by focusing on death of Bro Ali. The same technology that is used to destroy enemies or the so-called threats can be used by the traitors just by fiddling “with some frequencies” (Hanif 278) as Bro Ali précised. This suggests that the misuse of power to oppress the imperial objects can produce rebels, who in defiance can utilize the same technique and technology for the resistance. Charles Eisenstein Speaker in *The reality sand witch* and Author of *Synchronicity, Myth, and the New World Order* describes the futility of control and the illusion in which West is living as follows:

We live in a civilization built on control, on the idea that we can order the world through material and social technology and, once we perfect those technologies, win the war against nature, against disorder, against uncertainty. But in fact, the world is messy, chaotic, and unpredictable, and no matter how tightly we attempt to orchestrate events, control slips through our grasp like mud through a clenched fist. We are immersed in an ideology that says that with the next technological revolution, with next medical innovation, or the next set of comprehensive regulations, finally we will get all the messy variables under control and live in an orderly, secure world. (Eisenstein)

The illusion of “the technological utopia” surely exists, but for the West only and for limited time, the instability and inequality between those binaries is the real problem and that would continue to destroy humanity. This paradigm to control human movement is depicted in *Exit West*. The face of city has been transformed because of technological expansions, “the cinemas had been replaced by shopping arcade for computers and electronic peripherals” but it has destructive impact on the city as well. As the “neighborhoods fell to the militants in startling quick succession, so that Saeed’s mother’s mental map of the place where she had spent her entire life now resembled an old quilt” (Hamid 65). The bombardments vanishes people as well as buildings. Technology has turned

the city into a “deserted place, with no sign of inhabitants or life” (57). The same technology however plays a healing role, provides freedom to escape from trauma of atrocities. The hi-tech devices like phones, computers and internet allow people to communicate where they are unable to meet. Through cellphones, people can escape from reality as their phones “sniffed out an invisible world, as if by magic, a world that was all around them, and also nowhere, transporting them to places distance and near, and to places that had never been and would never be” and when the internet connections were being suspended due to curfews the idea of not getting in touch with each other “is almost more terrifying for them than the bombs falling around them — that feeling of being marooned without contact” (39). Hamid also highlights the role of media in forming multiple yet unified identities. As when Nadia sees a picture of a girl in a robe reading newspaper, she instantly gets startled and “had the bizarre feeling of time bending all around her” (154). The feeling of time collapse makes a horrible impact on Nadia as “she would split into two Nadias” (155) unable to understand the difference between illusion and reality created by social media. The photograph of a woman wearing black robe reading newspaper can be any refugee who is stuck in the ambiguity of war. Said contends in *Culture and Imperialism* (1994) that instead of strong master discourses and new narratives, in modern times, “photographs or texts are used merely to establish identities” (Said 405) in this way Said refers “Berger’s programme” (Western visual culture provided by John Berger), which is another way of articulation and through this we enter into “control system”. The criterion through which West has marginalized and *Othered* the East and Arab image by manipulating texts, photographs and dictating through social media to control masses and dominate the narratives, is now utilized by the East and all other Non-Western nations to counter the Western dominance. Said further argues that “fragile images [family photographs] often carry next to heart, or placed by the side of the bed, are used to refer to that which historical times has no right to destroy” (405).

Contrary to the agony that people face because of military violence in their native land and unwelcoming nature of natives, Hamid highlights the western discourse on migration through the media, which instead of reporting the havoc of war and its impact on people, are more concerned about the “unprecedented flow of migrants” to the West that are “building walls and fences and strengthening their borders” (71). These doors provides the passage of migrants instead of long journeys undertook by land or sea, thus are used as a distancing device to bring into light the borderlessness and inefficiency of governing bodies. *Red Birds* similarly illustrates this fact through the voice of Ellie in *Red Birds* that there is “no point of denying human nature” (Hanif 142), despite of the ban on migrants in United States by President Trump and his constant threats to the illegal migrants and even the implementation of strict policies to resist the flow, the ratio of unauthorized migration keeps on rising because the hatred against Non-Western is still present. Technology, however, is to be blamed for disorientation. The symbol of Window in *Exit West* is very significant due to destruction “one’s relationship to windows now changed” (68) it is considered as a bridge or a barrier between the viewer and the outside world. Conventionally, windows symbolize freedom_ a way to escape from reality but in this novel it is a “border through which death was possibly most likely to come” (Hamid 68).

The authors has tried to deconstruct the power narrative by representing familiar dominant concepts and ideologies in an unfamiliar way to question the power structures. Amitava Kumara in *The Other of Invention: Mohsin Hamid’s Novel of Magic and Migration* (2017) discusses that Hamid represents the struggle of migrants and the sorrows of leaving their homeland and loved ones from the viewpoint of the *Other*, plus the choices that has to be made under such conditions (n.pag.). Moreover, he has utilized the “imaginative possibilities of the fiction” by using various metaphors for

example the portals, which has made their journey “insubstantial, nearly weightless” (Kumara n.pag). The magical portals are the imagined view of the world which in reality is full of cultural segregation and geographic borders. *Drizzle Review* accounts it as follows:

Magical realism has been used to reflect a version of the world that feels too strange to be true, and yet, unmistakably, too true to be strange. Magical realism seeks to expose what is absurd about the banal and what is banal about the absurd. Though hailing from quite a different context, Mohsin Hamid does precisely that in *Exit West* (Valley n .pag.)

The rise of technology has changed the world order and limit the power of many nations to challenge the foreign encounters. Hanif and Hamid deconstruct the power structures by criticizing the meaninglessness of war from various perspectives using metaphors and symbols. Alex Joyner in a review on *Exit West* entitled *The Destabilizing doors of Exit West* argues that migration is not a problem to be discussed or solved, rather its part of our existence and its human nature to move. These magical doors however, add “disorientation” (n .pag.), as it destabilizes the norms related to global security and immigration by disappearing hard boundaries. Moreover the attitudes of natives are very much similar, as Nadia and Saeed being refugees in London face violence and threats by the nationalists, and the refugees who took refuge in their country were also slaughtered likewise as if “the faces and building had changed but the basic reality of their predicament had not” but Nadia believes that their “country was poor... did not had much to lose” (Hamid 164).

With refugees, the dark and black images are being associated throughout the novel. When Saeed and Nadia first escape from their city the magical doors are described as dark and opaque because it “didn’t reveal what is on the other side” and as they enter into this they are horrified by “the blackness of a door”. Moreover, when they ask refuge in London they get the “worst of the black holes in the fabric of the nation” (Hamid 126). Darkness is always associated with death and captivity in literature and elsewhere. For example, in *The Heart of Darkness* (1899), Joseph Conrad associates darkness with African continent because of the barbarism and savageness of their culture according to European perception. The phrase is also used by Hamid to describe the prevailing darkness because of violence and migration “in all these locations, there is a doorway, “dark, darker than night, a rectangle of complete darkness — the heart of darkness” (Conrad 128). This analogy is significant to understand the position and condition of refugees in the contemporary globe as their status is no more than the slaves. The abrupt shift of time and space using the “magical doors” can also be significant of the reason that those who never experience these chaotic journeys and trauma of leaving homes can never understand what refugees and internally displaced persons actually go through and it is in fact beyond imagination. Edward Said says in *Culture and Imperialism* that “Marginality and homelessness are not to be gloried in; they are to be brought to an end” (5). It would severely be injustice with them to depict migrant’s agonies in heroic manner or idealizing the imagined pain. Hence in a way by using magical realism, Hamid maintains the familiarity and strangeness with the subject in his narrative.

Hanif has defamiliarized the entire situation by giving philosophic voice and intellectual capability to the dog, who is unable to voice his critique on American modern warfare, which is involved in various conflicts in the world. His agency can be equated with those so called empowered world organizations for example The Organization for World Peace, United Nations Human Commissioner for Refugees, The International Organization for Peace, Care and Relief, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, United Nation Organization and many others, who however provide platforms to address the injustices and advocate peace and negotiations over war and conflict, but are incapable to resolve those issues. The states of Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon,

Sudan, Kashmir and many others are in constant struggle for freedom, and these organizations have not resolved their issues, even after all these years the organizations failed to ensure their security. The binary of negotiations versus war is very complicated as it is believed universally in politics that “people only want to negotiate when they have nothing to offer” (Hanif 111) but the ones who are in power never chose to negotiate as resolution is never their aim. The silence of power structures over the important issues make them invisible spectators, who have no agency over super powers rather these state and non-state agents are submissively obedient to them. Mutt describes those soldiers who are silently involved in this conflict without their logical consent, as Ghosts. He states that White men are ghosts and “ghosts are forever” (Hanif 273) whom he “can’t even smell” and they “don’t want to talk to us” rather “scare us with their fire power” (258). Lady Flowerbody describes that one cannot be rude to those ghosts even though she works for them but has no agency to question their barbarism. In an interview to *The Express Tribune* (2018), Hanif has described his ghosts as the “ones who left us in the middle of the conversation” therefore ghosts can be the embodiment of all foreign white officials, peace establishing organizations and militancy who are silent towards inhumane activities (n.pag.). He has also criticized the government who is involved in the continuation of sufferings. Mutt interprets that “The government is the biggest thief. It steals from the living, it steals from the dead. We just steal from each other” (Hanif 175) he has criticized the absent role of government in their nation’s disaster. Our predicament according to *Red Birds* is that “we have survived bomb but we are not going to survive our own greed” (172) Along with it, Hanif associates the refugees, oppressed and unprivileged who lose their lives with red birds. The red birds are symbolic of consequent deaths because of the inhumane wars, genocide and conflicts, over which the world is silent, “Red birds are real. The reason why we don’t see them is because we don’t want to. Because if we see them, we will remember. When someone dies in a raid or a shooting or when someone’s throat is slit, their last drop of blood transforms into tiny red birds and flies away” (Hanif 84). He further argues that “humans can be pedantic” they can spend time discussing political theories and “about the uses of inequality, but tell them where the red birds come from and they will shake their head as if you are trying to convert them to some mutt religion” (85). The misuse of power by both national and international state actors is the cause of disastrous conditions. Besides Mutt, the Doctor also mentions the presence of red birds, who paid the price of those vegetables and donations that come under USAID. Because the economic stability of all third world nations depends upon the Western aid, it chained them to the level that their agency to defy destroyed. Mutt says “These red birds worry me. They are everywhere. What worries me even more is that nobody seems to be able to do anything about them.” (Hanif 81). Charles Merlin Umpenhour (former Lieutenant Colonel) in his book *Freedom, a Fading Illusion* (2005) gives his critique on the organization of power elites. He argues that there is organized wide variety of institutions and agencies which work under the establishment of elites, and hence freedom is systemized. To quote him;

Globalization began over hundred fifty years ago with the British establishment’s desire to rule the world. After independence of colonies, a miniscule number of old and new monied families maintained the power to determine the affairs of the colonies. They in essence became America’s power elite force... these power elites used their wealth to establish various organizations and institutions founded on certain evangelistic collectivist principles, which has now become machinations... to fulfil a defined collectivist mission... to organize one world government. (Umpenhour 85-86)

Charles Merlin further argues that common masses and even the high officials are not allowed to attend those conferences and international meetings, in which directive decisions are to be made. This suggests that all the state actors have prescribed position with their limited freedom and agency. This silence and incapability of defiance questions the actual existence of freedom and human authority in dominant discourse. The subject of slavery in changing social patterns is of much importance, as in a controlled society the power structures have expertly maintained this illusion of choice. The important thing is to understand the way through which this illusion persists. *Red Birds* accounts it as follows:

The world is full of struggling film-makers... they have filmed some dead zoomie in the desert... they would not kidnap, what will they demand in ransom: happiness? They do not want to lose their refugee status. Who wants to get free packages food and almost now Nike attire? (Hanif 204)

The challenging conditions of refugees in this era and their absolutely unrealistic representation provokes negative reactions against migrants. Technology thus provides a platform for expression but has diffused the boundary between freedom of expression and power of agency. The organizations and common masses are allowed to express their opinion on social media and raise their voices against the injustices through campaigns but the ultimate narrative and discourse that is to be considered is the one which is narrated by powerful institutions. Hanif has clearly defamiliarized the whole power structure by problematizing the dichotomy of self/other, questioning mechanism of control. "Imagine selling souls of your loved ones... sell the memories of the desert... imagine the red birds fluttering in gilded cages. Imagine your most private grief as a party decoration" (86) the enslavement of freedom is being questioned by equating the process of colonization with that of rebellion. This mechanism of control by power in disguise of freedom needs to be discussed, in order to get rid of this persistent plague.

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