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**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Individual Preferences and Constraints: A Naturalistic Study of  
"Exit West"**

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**ABSTRACT**

The present research study endeavors to probe out the aspects of individual preferences and constraints through the naturalistic study of Hamid's (2017) *Exit West*, under the theoretical framework of Zola's (1964) *The Experimental Novel: And other Essays*. The purpose of this research is to identify the naturalistic factors that affects an individual free will and how he or she acts by facing certain environmental constraints. Zola (1964) is the proponent of naturalistic theory and according to this theory, a person's actions and choices are experimented by his or her heredity and environment. This study measured the influence of certain factors that govern human nature and behavior by highlighting the lives of two main characters, Nadia and Saeed. It focused on the issues of survival, human nature and behavior, detachment and social environment affecting the lives of protagonists. This qualitative approach of the study supports the reasons and findings that have been discussed with the help of naturalism. This research also analyses application of naturalism with the help of experimental methods that triumphed everywhere.

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**Introduction**

Individual preference is a path through which a character or her/his family play an active role. They choose services that best encounter with their unique needs. Consequently, it may be affected by the surroundings and the environment in which a person brings up. It covers cultural, religious, educational and geographical believe systems. The other point, constraint, shows inadequacy or control. It shows the stiffness of manner and inhibitions among the relations of peoples.

The theory of Naturalism believes that nature knows everything. It's a study of uniformity and entirety. It suggests neutral laws; by minus the quest of scientific acquaintance. According to naturalistic methodology, man's limitless exploration proves his concrete belief as a source of authorization. According to the naturalistic point of view, theories change; methodology does not. This term first coined by Emile Zola. He saw atmospheres and happenings with the help of divine causes.

This study focused on viewing the individuals by making their own preferences and impact of natural factors upon these choices. The main purpose of this research is to investigate that nature plays very important role in an individual life. This research investigates with the same problems, in the work of Hamid (2017) *Exit West*, present in the lives of main characters, Sana and Saeed. It shows detachment of characters due to changing conditions, that has impact on their lives.

Zola (1964) substitutes for the study of the abstract and the metaphysical man, the study of the natural man, governed by physical or chemical laws, and modified by the influences of his surroundings; it is in one word the literature of our scientific age, as the classical and romantic literature corresponded to a scholastic and theological age. (p.23)

Another important principle of it is that the discipline spectacles us "the limit of our actual knowledge." But the decision of what we know and what we not know is authorizing: "as science humbles our pride, it strengthens our power" (p.22).

This research exams the conditions in which Saeed and Nadia, try to survive by choosing the best for them and by recognizing the constraints present throughout their whole journey. They don't have control on their fate, under the theoretical framework of Zola's (1964) *The Experimental Novel*. The study objectified by investigating social environment, poverty, survival, heredity and human nature. And also investigates that how the important decisions of their life depending on such type of impacting factors.

### **Literature Review**

Perfect (2019) in his writing beautifully represents of characters in Hamid's (2017) *Exit West*. It is a fiction that broadly celebrates and responses the situational crisis, preferences and external factors constantly putting its impact on the lives of Nadia and Saeed. We all are migrated by our past. In the same way, Hamid's (2017) work claims that we are all drifters from side to side time. His novel combines elements of naturalism. Its protagonists escape their city by taking their own decisions, through a door that instantly carry them to Mykonos, and then further from London to California. His story interspersed with a series of pieces that constitute a shadow on how their journey mediated by actually-existing technologies.

According to Brauer (2019) Hamid's (2017) novel *Exit West* mysteriously and drastically altering black doors that transport his characters from one place to another. Ranciere's (2010) discusses about disruptive powers that manifest itself through numerous points in the work. The very first kind is about detachment that break down physical doors and, make them altogether redundant. Second category is about the notion of time in which numerous mixed former populations are living harmoniously side by side one another. Third and most important category talks about previous relations in which characters disqualified from political affairs and in which prototypes of party-political contribution are rationalized.

Sheikh (2020) said that Hamid (2017) work shows an endless tension between desiring to leave home not wanting to be coercively included a completely alien concept of what 'home'. The characters have their own preferences. Nadia wears a burqa, does not pray, and lives on her own in an apartment building on the verge of collapsing. The work also takes the readers toward some constraints present in the life of characters. These points not only express their changing emotions and personalities but how these constraints influenced so strongly by the transformations experienced by their geographical surroundings. After the break down of their towns, Saeed and Nadia adopt some standards, such as they begin to hear rumors about 'doors' "that could take you elsewhere, often to places far away" (p. 72).

Agamben (1998) said that the doors in the novel are something extraordinary taking place for Saeed and Nadia through which they hope would take them to a safe place, where they could build a new life together as they have come this far by each other's comfort through sleepless nights. But initially reader don't have the idea that where these doors will take them.

Valley (2019) reviewed and reported that Hamid's (2017) work is a story of immigration, distance and love. The protagonists, find themselves in an unnamed Middle Eastern country. At the beginning of their relationship, their country was rushed into turmoil. A number of phenomenal doors seem to offer several opportunities to pass from these doors and move in to a dreamy place of the world. Both the protagonists took a chance and cross the edge. Their journey is circuitous. Their journey is a combination of xenophobia, alienation, and hardship. They suffer unbelievable conflicts under unimaginable conditions.

Hamid (2017) never focused the details of this imaginary occurrence. In the novel it seems that world is going to accept them as a fact because there is no conversation about the erroneous science of these doorways. And there is no any type of inquiry about their origin. We discuss (and fume over) the consequences of immigration and the influx of foreign persons into our countries but we often fail to really investigate the unfortunate causes of such migration.

Saeed and Nadia step from one realm to another realm and from one community to another community. Throughout the journey there are numerous witnesses of the rise and drop of their association. Hamid (2017) states the division of worldwide revolt within the parameters of a human connection. The main themes of his work is: discovery, love, and loss. Sure, Saeed and Nadia are victims of all sorts of bigotry and struggler of their journey. This piece of art covered with a calamitous socio-political epic. *Exit West* is instantaneously gigantic and miniature. It is the story of mystic doorways. It is related to two young people's dwindling in and out of love. It is the story of the domain on the edge of catastrophe. It also shows that how humans are accomplished with generosity even in the utmost annoying conditions.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework is based on Zola's (1964) *The Experimental Novel: And other Essays*, discussed with the perspective of naturalism. His work is about the natural development that drives the demonstration of human intellect into methodical trail. He is working to demonstrate that the experiment primes to the acquaintance of corporal lifecycle and it would also lead to the information of the obsessive and knowledgeable life. The liberty of living figures is not different to the engagement of experimentation. The change is that a lifeless figure relishes simply the usual, peripheral atmosphere. The spirit of the advanced entity is established in an inner and finalized atmosphere accomplished with continual physicochemical possessions closely like the external surroundings. There is a complete determinism in the remaining circumstances of natural occurrences; for the living as well as also for the non-living bodies. He shows the earth on which characters are to tramp and the phenomena to grow.

The study owns scientific information of the man, both in his separable and shared affairs. Our own acts have certain reasons and guidelines. We are conscious about our thinking and feeling. But if we request to critic performances of man, and distinguish the reasons which style him act, that is overall a changed mechanism. The activities of a man and his acts are the ways of terminologies of his susceptibility and his determination. There is a connection between the acts and their causes. We do not feel it, we are not conscious of it, we are therefore appreciative to take it, and to predict at it, from the actions which we see and the words which we hear. We are indulged to plaid off this man's activities he performed in such a status quo. The experimentalist is the inspecting official of nature and the authors are the inspecting officials of men and their urges.

He said that it is an unavoidable evolution. Literature, does not be contingent just upon the novelist but it is subjective by the nature. It portrays by the man whom it studies. If the thinkers change their notions about nature, the true contrivance of life, they force us to monitor them, to lead them even, so as to play our role in the new theories. The supernatural man is dead. Our whole zone is changed by the

entrance of the physiological man. There is no doubt that due to their magnificence "Achilles' Anger," "Dido's Love," will last ever. But today there is a need to analyze irritation and affection, of determining just how such desires work in the human being. We have become experimentalists instead of philosophers. In short, everything is summed up in this great fact: the experimental method in letters, as in the sciences, is the way to explain the natural phenomena, both individually and socially, of which metaphysics, until now, has given only irrational and supernatural explanations.

This research followed a qualitative approach. It analyses the data based on the idea of individual preferences and constraints, through the naturalistic study of *Exit West*. The study analyzed by using online journals, books and articles. A number of concerned works and other sources have been engaged for this purpose. For the investigation of research, as a sample, those lines are selected from the novel that best describe the idea. The process of data collecting techniques focused on four steps, carefully and comprehensive reading, note taking, interpreting and categorizing.

The researcher read the Hamid's (2017) novel, *Exit West*, carefully and comprehensively. For the reliability, she read and reread the novel for better understanding. After the collection of data, it is interpreted by using naturalistic theory.

### **Analysis**

This research focused on naturalistic study depicted in the selected novel. It shows that how the idea had an impact on the life of two main characters present in the novel, *Exit West*. There are three important values of naturalism. According to first value, the play should be genuine and it displays the vigilant study of social performance and consciousness. Their inspirations and activities must be dealt with inheritance as well as atmosphere. Second value talks about the struggles in the play. And the third value talks about the simplicity of the play.

For Zola (1964), Naturalism is a scientific realism, which accepts and uses the scientific methods based upon the intention that man's free will is a deception and his acts are resolute by his heredity and environment. This emphasis on determinism differentiates Zola's (1964) naturalism from other forms of realism.

According to the first value of naturalism, Hamid's (2017) novel is an unpretentious and it also shows person's behaviour and his/her psychology. In the novel, Saeed and Nadia are behaving according to the situations, they are facing due to military control on their country. They moved from country to country for a better life. They are making their own preferences without any external guidance. And with the passage of time their mentality also affected. From the start of the journey, they are very much fond with each other but at the end there is a sense of detachment

present between them. "The following evening helicopters filled the sky like birds startled after a gunshot, or by the blow of an axe on the base of their tree" (32).

It seemed to Nadia that the further they moved from the city of their birth, through space and through time, the more he sought to strengthen his connection to it, tying ropes to the air of an era that for her was unambiguously gone." (p.187)

Second value is about the struggles, so the whole work shows the battle between the two main characters and the external forces. Their existence and activities are affecting by their inheritance and surroundings. The research also fulfilled the third value of naturalism, and that is play is simple.

It might seem odd that in cities teetering at the edge of the abyss young people still go to class—in this case an evening class on corporate identity and product branding—but that is the way of things, with cities as with life, for one moment we are pottering about our errands as usual and the next we are dying, and our eternally impending ending does not put a stop to our transient beginnings and middles, until it does. (p.1,2)

According to Zola (1964) nature is doing experiments on the life of the characters. It is putting its impact on passionate and intellectual self of a person. The same is happening in the work, "but that is the way of things, for when we migrate, we murder from our lives those we leave behind" (94).

So, the whole study showed the effects of naturalistic elements on the life of two main characters. This study showed that people don't have much control on their fate. So same is the case with, Nadia and Saeed, their own preferences and constraints that constantly revolves around them, influencing their actions, their behaviors both physically and mentally.

## **Conclusion**

This research represented a contemporary society by highlighting subordinate class characters in a metropolitan setting. It is a vision of an up-to-date life by emplacing the effects of heredity and environment. The characters in the work who at first act through passion, at the end, acting by reasons and show a little slight in to their behaviors. It also shows inevitable results of the choices they have made. This study shows the view of world and the forces surrounding humans.

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