

SPEECH AND SILENCE DIALECTICS IN COMMUNICATIONAL ACTION **İLETİŞİMSEL EYLEMDE SÖZ VE SUSKUNLUK DİYALEKTİĞİ**

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ÖZET

Modernleşmenin ortaya çıkardığı bireycilik, zamana ayarlı, mekanik, tekdüze ve hızlı yaşam tarzı, özellikle kent insanlarında, iletişimsizlik, yabancılaşma, yaşama karşı duyarsızlık ve bunalıma yol açmaktadır. Yaşam tekdüze, mekanik, kendini tekrarlayan ve biri diğerinden farklı olmayan günlerden oluşmaktadır. İnsanların birbiri ile duygusal paylaşımları ortadan kalkmaya ve yaşam bir görev bilinciyle sürdürülmeye çalışılmaktadır. Söz, sadece yapılabileceklerin paylaşım anında veya bunlarla ilgili anlarda var olmaktadır. Kuru ve yavan söz, fazla bir şey anlatmamasına rağmen, suskunluk, insan ruhunun derinliklerinde birşeylerin yolunda gitmediğinin ip uçlarını vermektedir.

Anahtar Kavramlar: Bireycilik, bunalım, duyarsızlık, iletişimsizlik, modernleşme, yabancılaşma.

ABSTRACT

The individuality created by modernization, time-adjusted, mechanical, monotonous and rapid lifestyle, especially in urban people, leads to loss of communication, alienation, indifference to life, and depression. Life consists of monotonous, mechanical, self-repeating and non-distinct days. People's emotional sharing with each other is beginning to disappear, and people try to continue life with a consciousness of duty. The word exists only at the moment of sharing about which things will be done. Even though simple and plain words don't say much, silence gives clues that something is not going well in the depths of the human soul.

Keywords: Individualism, depression, indifference, loss of communication, modernization, alienation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The individuality created by modernization, time-adjusted, mechanical, monotonous and fast-living style, especially in urban people, leads to loss of communication, alienation, indifference to life, and depression. This indifference begins with the alienation of man to man and then becomes alienation from himself. Therefore, the commodities which were given much importance and which were obtained by making sacrifices before, are transformed into an iron cage, surrounding a person, enslaving him. The person who is drowning within himself cannot find a way out, falls into depression, because of the anxiety and helplessness that he wants to end this.

This mechanical, monotonous, rapid lifestyle and individualism created by modernization especially lead to an indifference of urban people against life. Life consists of monotonous, mechanical and repetitive, non-distinct days. People's emotional sharing with each other is beginning to disappear, and people try to continue life with a consciousness of duty. In daily life, everything is carried out in the form of a to-do list and realized as it should be. Therefore, this lifestyle affects negatively the way people think, absorbs their energy of life, and causes people to see life as a burden.

When the intellectual structure of the societies and the organizations depending on it are disturbed, the deterioration of the nature of the social entity and the memberships that constitute it negatively affect the structure of thinking and behavior. Therefore, the abnormal increase of suicide is indicative of a spiritual impairment (Durkheim, 1992, 404-405). For example, according to the Wiener Zeitung's report on 17.05.2013, the rate of suicide rate in EU countries is higher than the

European Union average.¹ In this regard, Rollo May notes that the greatest problem of the 20th century is that people do not know what they want and feel, and that they become insensitive to life because of these reasons (2014, 18). Therefore, this state of soul, which the modern order reveals with individualism, opens up new gates for profit which consider them as a consumer object. People are constantly conditioned to exist by consuming and to be valuable for the modern order in this way.

In the present study, the first of the three films, *The Seventh Continent*, which is one of “the trilogy films of urban”, by Austrian director Michael Haneke, which discusses the indifference created by modern life in human life, will be analyzed according to the Emile Durkheim's suicide Theory and Jürgen Habermas' communicative action Theory.

2. THE HISTORICAL PROCESS OF MODERNIZATION

The reform movements and philosophical enlightenment that started in medieval Europe are parallel with the development of individual thought. In the age of individualism or free entrepreneurship, individuality is under the control of the mind. Individualism is at the core of bourgeois liberalism. While liberalism was originally defined as the existence of free entrepreneurs who governed their property, this has changed completely in the age of capital which developed after the industrial revolution (Horkheimer, 2002, 152, 154). Therefore, the consumption and lifestyle of the great economic powers that make life easier have made human life luxurious and comfortable. However, the modern order, whose purpose is now completely different, has been established to seize the market and to manipulate the human mind, circling its own wheels by imposing the modern man to live the moment by causing them to consume their hope of self-realization one day and to try to exist by consuming.

The modern order, which has reduced people to a consumer position and expects them to behave according to the secret mechanism in which the pure mind is presented to them at every moment of their life, does not allow a person to think of anything, to research, and to make an attempt. Because the modern order classifies everything that is needed for life in a way that is appropriate to the People's purchasing power, presenting it in ready packets (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2010, 167-168). Therefore, these lifestyle, tools, and machines, designed for the comfort and easy flow of modern life, and the mechanical rules that they create, gradually influence people and cause people to consume their lives like robotic beings. Thus, people, according to the purchasing power for the modern order, are made as consumer and objects consumed also by this order.

3. LOSS OF COMMUNICATION, ALIENATION, INDIFFERENCE AND DEPRESSION DILEMMA IN MODERN HUMAN

Because of human nature, a person must have a purpose he/she wants to achieve to hold on to life. The way of life that emerged with modernization reveals the types of people who are silent by destroying the imagination of people, without emotion, with empty conversations revolving around daily events, who hide their human status from others, then from themselves, and who vacillate in loss of communication and despair. The mechanical lifestyle, which flows easily and turns like the gears of a wheel, especially steals the soul of the city people and causes them to sustain life with a consciousness of duty, to become insensitive, depressed and to lose his power and will to fight.

Today, everything is becoming similar thanks to the culture industry. The great capital, by working in harmony with others in itself, makes one appear free person in the same sterile concrete cages of each other and puts them under the burden of the culture industry (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2010, 162-163). Therefore, a person is an entity that serves the purpose of modernism in a cage drawn from the limits that play the role that modern order dictates to him, being an entity that realizes too late that the modernism makes the human sick.

¹ Brussels. “Lithuania is the country with the highest suicide rate in the EU. Austria is also above the EU average with a suicide rate of 15 percent in total population” ...

Zygmunt Bauman defines society as a power of affirmation and sharing like nature, and states that things shared together become glorified at the same time. He defines living in society as the only recipe for happiness. The individualism brought by modernization eliminates the characteristics of people who come together to share and achieve the problems, and it prevents people who have the same problem to solve it together and to take power from each other (2011, 10, 64-65). Therefore, the unrest and deprivation of modern society are not due to economic poverty, nor to any social grievance. The reason for the deprivation and unrest in which they exist is due to spiritual deprivation (Durkheim, 1992, 404). This spiritual deprivation stems from the fact that human beings, a social entity, without sharing with other people, continue to live comfortably as robotic beings in the way of life created by the modern order.

The modern order leads to the elimination of social norms with the flexibility brought for the needs, and thus ensures its continuity with the validity of what it offers to the individualized society. The anxiety created by uncertainty in the individualized world of modern man is also the main reason that increases the abundance of consumption created by modern order (Bauman, 2018, 270-271, 274-275). Therefore, people who feel lonely and helpless can realize their existence only when they are buying consumer objects.

Max Horkheimer argues that the sense of selfish is stronger in civilized people than in primitive humans. In his view, primitive people live in the pursuit of human pleasure and satisfaction, while civilized people live by developing their individual feelings, control their pleasure and satisfaction for their well-being and security, and always try to seize and hold power. The more the desire to establish power, the more intense the domination of the material being over them, because the way to conquer social power is to establish power over the materials. After a while, this causes their minds to gradually turn into formal mental machines by taking them away from their true individual freedoms. (2014, 145-146). Thus, they become robotic creatures that perceive life through the account of continuous profit and loss, and move away from human values and norms, and serve modern order as a consumption object. But human beings are a biological and social entity with feelings and thoughts. Therefore, they begin to experience problems in its inner world. This lifestyle and bought objects turn into an 'iron cage' that surrounds them. The lack of empathy, thus causing a lack of emotional communication, anxiety, and despair causes the sense of meaningless life to occur after a point. This situation leads to the weakening of the connection between materials and person who is drawn into himself and who lose in himself.

The film "The Seventh Continent" in English (Der siebente Kontinent 1989), directed by Michael Haneke, describes how insensitivity to the life and mood disorders, which are turning increasingly to depression, lead the three-person Schober family to suicide, which are a middle-class, modern urban family, with a mechanically, uniformly and uncommunicably, comfortable lifestyle that is time-adjusted, between home, work, school, car wash, grocery shopping, TV watching, sleep.

4. THE ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION CREATED BY MODERNIZATION: A SAMPLE FILM ANALYSIS: 'THE SEVENTH CONTINENT'

4.1. Theoretical Infrastructure of the Research

During the rise of the Roman Empire, there was a great increase in suicide events. This became a short time since Christian societies internalize the best aspects of Roman culture and act together.

The use of printing from the XVI. century, Renaissance and Reform movements have elevated the civilization level of these societies. There was no significant increase in suicide incidents up to XVIII. century. However, there have been subsequent increases in suicide incidents up to three, four and five fold.

It has been observed that the increase in suicide rates in Europe in the 19th century was the cost of civilization and that suicide rates were directly proportional to the level of culture. Suicide incidents

are common in the most culturally diverse regions of countries. Therefore, it is thought that there is a link between enlightenment and suicide. (Durkheim, 1992, 383-385).

Suicide is the direct or indirect result of a positive or negative act that an individual does against his or her own life. There are different types of suicides whose basic characteristics are different from each other. However, the most common form of suicide in modern societies is egoistic suicide. These suicides arise as a result of the loss of the individual's commitment to society and life due to the anxiety and indifference created by extreme individualization in modern societies. This type of suicide is therefore manifested by the result of a person's self-esteem, self-focus, and the loss of ties to society, leading to depression and finding life meaningless and annoying. (Durkheim, 1992, 23, 370). According to May, the sense of indifference that one experiences within himself is a feeling of inertia that arises when a person believes to have no power to manipulate the life, manage human relationships or influence the world in which he/she lives. For this reason, many of the present-day people feel helpless and meaningless. A sense of loneliness and indifference creates a great deal of pain and anxiety in a modern human. Confusion, uncertainty, perplexity about who we are and what we should do reveals the most painful anxiety. (May, 2014, 27, 35-36, 45). The intellectual structure of the societies, the nature of the social entity and the deterioration of the components that constitutes it negatively affects the structures of thinking and behavior. Therefore, an abnormal increase in suicide is indicative of psychological impairments in humans. (Durkheim, 1992, 404-405). According to May, for modern people of the 20th century, because they are unable to cope with the desperation for life, their helplessness and depression somehow lead them to destructive actions (2014, 27). The majority of people who commit suicide are well educated and wealthy people. Suicide events, which have increased enormously in modern societies, reveal deep unrest and helplessness due to the lack of communication among these societies (Durkheim, 1992, 60, 408). According to May, in general, the main reasons for the feelings of insensitivity and the meaninglessness of life are as follows;

- ✓ Social values that are eviscerated,
- ✓ Deterioration of self-perception,
- ✓ Impairment of interpersonal communication,
- ✓ Deterioration of relationship with nature,
- ✓ The assessment of persons according to their purchasing power (2014, 47-77).

Durkheim notes that the feeling of sadness, which shows a sickly development in human life, has turned into suicidal action by adversely affecting human consciousness and an increase in suicide incidents in developed societies. Individualization in society also negatively affects the family which is a social entity. Uncommunication and alienation between married couples not only increases the Suicidal Tendencies but also reinforces this tendency more (1992, 386, 394). Even sexuality, which is one of the many human actions that delight human beings, is increasingly becoming an empty, mechanical and meaningless experience (May 2014, 19). The fact that Anna and Georg get out of bed and say goodbye to each other after the clock rings at 6.00 am as if they hadn't had sex just before 6:00 am in the morning shows that sex is perceived as a routine in life.

Demiray describes suicide, which is a communicative act, as a self-killing (1994, 408). There may be many reasons for an individual to commit suicide. They are generally listed as follows;

- ✓ Hopelessness,
- ✓ Pessimism
- ✓ Feeling of meaningless life,
- ✓ Losing self-esteem and confidence,
- ✓ The desire to punish oneself or other people (Kaya, 1999, 7-8).

According to Jurgen Habermas' theory of communicative action, the individual enters into a linguistic environment in which such relations are reflected in their relations with the world. This linguistic environment is the outer world, which is the sum of the situations that exist. The

environment, described as the 'world of life' (Lebenswelt) by Habermas, is a social environment that reflects interpersonal relations, institutions, organizations, traditions and other cultural values. In this social environment, people take communicative action according to the norms and values established beforehand. The communicative actions of human are determined by the values and norms. However, there is an inner world in which people reflect on their subjectivity, feelings, thoughts, and goals (1987, 304-308). Therefore, problems arise if the inner world of human is not in harmony with the world of life with which they are interacting.

Through the film 'Seventh Continent', chosen as a research object, the uncommunication and alienation of the Schober family will be resolved below, through the communicative actions that they reflect in their inner world as pain and despair, speech and silence.

4.2. Short Story Of The Film

Actors include Georg Schober who played in the roles of Dieter Berner; Birgit doll in the roles of Anna Schober; Leni Tanzer in the roles their daughter Eva Schober, and Udo Sammel, who played as Anna Schober's brother Alexander.

The first part of the three-part film begins in 1987 and the second part begins in 1988 and the final part ends in 1989 with the collective suicide of the family, a planned and programmed death journey.

4.2.1. Part One, the Year 1987

The film begins in 1987 with the car wash scene. There is Schober Family of three persons in the car, Georg and Anna sit in front with their 9 to a 10-year-old daughter, Ave, in the backseat. Anna works with her brother Alexander in an optician belonging to the family, and Georg works as an engineer at a company. Their daughter Ave is a student.

As the car leaves after washing, a poster, on the left, on the wall, "welcome to Australia! written by an Australian travel agency, where waves appear on a blank beach on the sea, is attracting attention. Then the Schober family comes home by shopping at the grocery store. They park the car in a closed parking lot and carry shopping bags from luggage to the kitchen. Anna puts things in order and prepares food.

Everything is run smoothly, regularly and mechanically. Parking door is opened and closed mechanically, kitchen tools and utensils are mechanically operated.

Anna tells Ave to pray and sleep. Ave, 'dear God, let me be a good girl and go to heaven' she prays. Anna turns the light off and gets out of the room.

The Schober family wakes up at 6:00 am with a radio announcement and news. Georg goes to the bathroom. Anna first goes to her daughter's room and wakes her up. Then she goes to the kitchen and makes breakfast. Then they all leave the house together, and Georg takes Anna to work and takes Ave to school. In the same way, he gets Anna from work and Ave from school at evening. The days are repeated in a time-adjusted, uniform, and mechanically.

In a letter to his mother-in-law, Anna mentions that her brother, Alexander, had a severe depression after he lost her mother. She writes that she and Georg are very interested in his brother, and Georg works hard. Georg's new chief at work doesn't like him very much. She writes that Ave's asthma attacks are suddenly over, and their economic status is improved due to the inheritance they receive.

At school, Ave tells her friends she became blind. The teacher asks her questions, and by the way, it turns out she's lying.

Anna's brother Alexander comes over for dinner. They all have dinner together. Anna and her brother Alexander laugh at the old memory of a client at work. Alexander tells Anna that he likes food very much. Anna tells him what she put in the food and how she did it. Alexander says like my mother and starts to cry. Anna hugged her brother and comforted her. Ave's teacher calls home. He



tells Anna about the Ave. Anna asks Ave why she lied. Ave denies it first. Then she admits that Anna said she was blind at school when the mother said she wasn't going to punish her. Anna would slap her even though she said she wouldn't do anything.

Anna checks her books and bags as Ave prepares to sleep. On her desk, she sees an article titled "blind, but not alone" in a magazine. She puts Ave to bed. She says she loves her. She asks her whether she feels alone. She hugged her and told her to pray. Ave, 'dear God, let me be a good girl and go to heaven' she prays. Anna, turn the light off and get out of the room.

The next day, Ave starts scratching and making noises that put her discomfort out while the teacher is in class. This attracts the teacher's attention and asks her what is happened. Ave says "my belly hurts and itches". The teacher lifts Ave's sweater and looks at her belly and said she was fine. The teacher leaves her and goes on to the lesson.

4.2.2. Part Two, the Year 1988

The flow of their lives continues in the same way. Georg, in his dream, sees the beach on the banner of 'welcome to Australia' and hears the sound of the waves. Anna wakes up feeling Georg's unrest. He asks what happened to him. But Georg doesn't tell him anything.

Anna and Georg, just before the alarm in the morning, have a sex mechanically like a job to do. After the sex is over, the radio alarm sounds and the news starts. They say good morning to each other as if they just woke up and didn't have sex. Anna goes to Ave's room and wakes her up like every morning. Then she goes to the kitchen and prepares breakfast and calls to Ave, "wear the Red cardigan" from the kitchen. Georg goes to the bathroom like every morning, brushes his teeth and ties his shoes in the same place.

Georg sees an accident on the way after Anna got away from work and Ave from a school like every evening. They watch the officers save the injured people and get the bodies out of the cars involved in the accident. Then they bring their cars to wash. When the car is washed Anna starts crying in the car. Her husband tries to comfort her silently by touching her.

4.2.3. Part Three, the Year 1989

They go to visit Georg's parents and return, with their family car. Anna goes to the doctor. Since the doctor said 'this is the last' when prescribing medicine to Anna, it turns out that Anna had previously prescribed the drug again.

Georg buys items like a sledgehammer, saw, and hammer from the shop. Then he goes to take Anna. Anna leaves farewell to her brother Alexander when she leaves the office, unlike usual. Georg and Anna go to the bank together and say they want to withdraw all the money they have in their accounts. Because the money is not due, the bank Guard tells them not to break the maturity, and they can take credit if they want. However, Anna and Georg do not accept the offer saying they are going to Australia. They take their money and close their accounts. Then they sell their cars and go home by taxi. Georg shut the door and lock it after Ave and Anna got home.

Georg writes letters to his own parents. The letter states that they had decided to die with Anna, that they were hesitant to bring Ave together or leave her, that, however, on Sunday, when the priest said, "I miss death" at church, then Ave said "I do", so they decided to take her.

Ave is aware of the preparations and the fact that Anna and Georg can't decide whether to bring her together or leave her to grandma and grandpa, so she helps them to decide, saying "I do," in response to the priest's words about the death.

Anna telephoned Ave's teacher to tell him that Ave had a cold and that she couldn't come to school because he had a fever. She leaves the handset on. After a while, the doorbell rings. Georg opens the door and the postal worker warns him that the phone stays on. So he compresses the paper



within the phone so it doesn't touch, and he does the same thing for the doorbell and disconnects from the outside.

When Anna prepares a very elaborate breakfast, Georg begins to tear things apart. When Anna goes to the near Georg, she sees Ave being with her father and painting. When Georg broke the aquarium, Anna screams, " no." Ave starts crying. The fish flutter on the ground for a while. Georg tells Anna that breaking into pieces should be done systematically. They all eat breakfast together. Then Anna breaks the plates, cuts the clothes in the drawers and cabinets with scissors. Once it's all broken up, Georg tears the money they got from the Bank and knocks it in the toilet and flushes it.

They all have a snack together. Anna puts the drugs, which are prescribed before and stored in the house, in a glass, and dilutes it and gives it to Ave. Ave says it's bitter after drinking the medicine. Then, because Ave wants to watch TV, they all sit together in front of the TV. Ave dies while listening to the singing artist. Anna takes her in her arms and cries out with pain. Then she goes to the bathroom and drinks her own drugs. Georg waits for Anna to die at nearby, he can't stand the pain of her and vomit. He injects his own drug into his body. He lies next to Anna and Ave in front of the TV. On the back of the TV, on the wall, on a blank beach where the waves hit, there is the banner "welcome to Australia."

While waiting for death, Georg remembers Anna's crying in the car, the disgruntled expression on the face of his colleague he replaced, his mother and father giving themselves a farewell scene, a dull face expression in the market cashier calculating mechanically and quickly the products they buy, loneliness and sadness expression on the daughter's face, and the "welcome to Australia" banner. Finally, the television waiting to be closed, and the bodies of Anna, Georg and Ave are seen in front of the 'Welcome to Australia' poster.

4.3. Analysis Of The Film 'Seventh Continent'

In the film 'Seventh Continent', the time-adjusted communicative actions of the Schober family living in the city and in the modern order, which they establish with other people, based on monotonous, mechanical, insensitive, give-and-take manner, are limited to the execution of daily work.

There are also problems in the relationship between Anna, Georg, and their daughters Ave. Each of them has a withdrawal and alienation in an environment of non-communication without sharing feelings with others. Crying for no reason while smiling and becoming emotional for no reason and Ave's allergic asthma attacks, her saying his friends at school that her eyes suddenly blind or lie about the disorder she feels in her body are some signs that the insensitivity to life transforms into a collapse.

4.3.1. Routines in the Schober Family's Daily Life

- ✓ Automobile washing scenes in the mechanical environment,
- ✓ When leaving the car wash, the poster on the left wall,
- ✓ The same banner hanging over the television in their homes,
- ✓ In the grocery store, they fill the packed food from the shelves into the shopping cart.
- ✓ Calculation of the price of products in a mechanically, fast and uniform manner by the cashier,
- ✓ Ave's pray as 'Dear my god, let me be a good girl and go to the heaven, every night,
- ✓ Anna and Georg wake up every morning at 6.00 am with a radio announcement,
- ✓ Anna wakes up Ave and goes to prepare a kitchen breakfast,
- ✓ Georg goes to the bathroom and brushes his teeth then dresses,
- ✓ All together leave the house,
- ✓ Georg takes Anna to work and takes Ave to school every morning,
- ✓ Georg takes Anna from work and takes Ave from school every evening.

4.3.2. Communicative actions of the Schober family as 'speech and silence

- ✓ In Anna's letter to her mother-in-law, she writes, "Our troubled child, Ave's asthma crises were abruptly interrupted"
- ✓ Ave's saying "I do not see" at school and that the teacher reveals that she lied about the blindness,
- ✓ Ave's abdomen scratches attracting attention while the teacher is studying in the classroom, but the teacher does not see a problem with itching when he controls her belly,
- ✓ Georg's promotion to a high position, but the uneasiness he has fallen into because he is not welcomed by his chef,
- ✓ The sense of guilt of Georg about that he take the position belongs to his supervisor
- ✓ When they return from their work, they see a traffic accident on the way, and they look at the removal of corpses and injured persons from within the vehicles as if they are watching a film on TV.

4.3.3. Preparations for suicide as a communicative action

- ✓ Anna's frequent pharmacy stocking,
- ✓ Georg's saying Anna that we should stop from subscribing to the newspaper,
- ✓ Georg's purchase of a hammer, saw, and sledgehammer,
- ✓ Anna's farewell to her brother Alexander after work,
- ✓ Georg and Anna's closing their bank accounts,
- ✓ Georg and Anna's selling their cars,
- ✓ Georg's farewell letter to his parents,
- ✓ Although the clues give the impression that they will make a trip to Australia, it seems that this journey is a different journey, as Georg begins to break down the goods, and the aquarium.

5. CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION

In return for the easy and comfortable lifestyle offered to human by modernization, the individualism, time-adjusted, monotonous, and mechanical lifestyle resulting in loss of communication, alienation, antisocial and depressed feelings that arise in human beings create feelings of depression and helplessness and make life increasingly meaningless.

In the film 'Seventh Continent' about the time-adjusted, monotonous, mechanical flow of daily life in the city, the Schober family, which gives a harmonious family of middle-class urban look from the outside, reveals that they are experiencing a great depression in their inner world, behind the calm image and behavior that they reflected on the audience.

The 'mother, father and child trio' have forgotten to enter into emotional sharing. In order to draw attention to the feelings of loneliness that Ave falls into, the 'allergic asthma' crises, then the lie that she was "blind", finally the lie that she felt "discomfort and itching" in his belly in class can be considered as signs of the call for help unknowingly.

Finally, the mother, father, and child enter emotional sharing in silence in accordance with the same purpose as the preparations for their death journey. The word becomes only relevant when it is necessary and is connected to their journey. However, this word now contains a sense of emotion.

After joyfully having all of the prepared breakfast that Anna has prepared as a celebration table, this family journey begins with the dismemberment, break-up and tear-off actions that Georg started as a ritual of "spiritual purification".

They ironically put the last point in their lives in the front of 'television' that is the hand of capitalism that absorbs their life-energy, and 'Welcome to Australia!' poster.



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