
THE PURPOSE OF IRREDUCIBLE ELEMENT OF MAGIC IN MOHSIN HAMID'S *EXIT WEST*

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: 20/7/2019

Accepted: 25/8/2019

Published: Winter 2020

Keywords:

Hamid,
Exit West,
refugees,
magical doors,
politics.

Doi:

10.25212/lfu.qzj.5.1.15

ABSTRACT

Global migration and refugee crisis is one of the greatest problems faced by the contemporary world. There are an unexpected number of refugees and other displaced individuals who aim to pass through the borders of "privileged first world countries": At the same time, taking different measures to keep the refugees away by the European officials causes a severe xenophobia among them. Mohsin Hamid's fourth novel *Exit West* (2017) deals with these issues in detail and provides a transnational solution of magical doors which can lead people to anywhere in the world in a matter of seconds. The magical doors in *Exit West* suggest a borderless world in order to protect migration as a human right. Hamid presents a literary image of current immigrants' experience in a war-ridden world. This paper aims to explore the more recent development of using magical realism which is



used by Hamid to depict the controversial migration crisis.

INTRODUCTION

The closing years of the twentieth century and the beginnings of the twenty-first are considered as an age of migration, as argued by (Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, 1998, p. 3) in *The Age of Migration* because of instability and crises in Africa, the rapid development and growth in Asia, a shift from dictatorships to unstable and debt-plagued democracies in Latin America and growing economic and political integration in Western Europe. Apart from these, civil wars began in 2011- 2012 in the Middle East and witnessed the global migration crisis. Countries devastated by war became deserted by families and made Europe under the pressure of more than one million refugees and migrants in 2014-2015.

Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* deals with the moment when people leave their place of birth because of the violence of civil war and settle in various parts of Europe. Hamid used magical realism to open the doors towards the painfully realistic migrants' circumstances and to decode all border boundaries. Magical realist texts often deal with two paradoxical worlds. Therefore, it is a good literary device for those authors whose aims are to trace immigrants' experience, for they are living in several places and practicing two different worlds, the lost home, and the new foreign country.

The hybridity state of magical realism puts the term forward by theorists and critics as an important tool for postcolonial expression. The last two decades have seen a growing trend towards magical realism; there are a large number of published researches and articles describing magical realism used by Latin American, Indian, Canadian authors, in the postcolonial diaspora. D'Haen (1995, P. 195) believed the "essential feature of magical realism" is that the writing is issuing from the margin, from a place 'other' than the center," to those marginalized - geographically, socially, economically-by these same societies", it provides a space for minority writers to



explore issues outside of what has been, traditionally, a predominately white and western privileged center of discourse.

Using magical realism as a mode to deal with contemporary migration is somehow new. *Breaking the Bonds of Silence: The Immigrant Experience in Magical Realist Novels of Katherine Vaz and Chitra Divakaruni* by Hester (2003) who studied immigrants' experiences in magical realist, postcolonial and feminist texts. She discussed the subject of female oppression both as an immigrant and as a minority subgroups within the home. Recently a research entitled *Transnationalism in Theory and Fiction: Fluid Identity and Magical Realism in Contemporary Migrant Fiction from the US* by (Brouwer, 2015) utilizes magical realism as a bridge narrowing the distance between immigrants' different worlds, also she focuses on immigrant's fluid and transcultural identity in novels of Rebecca Goldstein's *Mazel* (1995) and Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007). The issue of showing refugee's crises at a global level, the struggle of different refugees in different new countries has been a controversial and much-disputed subject within the field of magical realism.

Bowers (2004, p. 63) claims that a characteristic of magical realism "which makes it such a frequently adopted narrative mode is its inherent transgressive and subversive qualities. It is this feature that has led many postcolonial, feminist and cross-cultural writers to embrace it as a means of expressing their ideas" The idea of certain historical, political, or cultural events and issues may be represented through the depiction of magical elements within a narrative so as to illuminate the "truth" of these issues is central to magical realism's twentieth-century roots and its continued development in the twenty-first century. (Mariboho, 2016, p. 6)

The novel fictionally represents the realities of the twenty-first century. Although the city where the protagonists live and flee from is 'unnamed', we cannot be sure, but it seems that we are solidly in the periphery, probably in a Muslim-majority country: the Middle East, or Southeast Asia, or possibly northern Africa. The historical events of migration resulted from the battle of Mosul (Iraq) and the Yemenite, Syrian Civil War that directly affected the European Union and, most



probably, had an impact on Donald Trump's travel ban and the Brexit. Moreover, these historical events can also represent credible sources of inspiration for Hamid to sum up in *Exit West*.

There are some debated questions in *Exit West*, notably, as Hamid wants to find out about: What if escape was as simple as walking through doors? Or what if the poor, oppressed, and alienated could simply migrate to somewhere else? What if innovated people want to leave, and what happened when they arrived? (Hamid, for *NPR*, 2017)

Thus, this study has been set out to describe some of the more recent developments in the field of magical realism as used to describe the issue of global immigration started in 2014. It seeks to address the following questions: What does it mean that Nadia and Saeed, the protagonists, flee from the unnamed city and end up in the US, in the San Francisco Bay Area? Why do the cities where protagonists emigrate to be specifically named, for instance, Mykonos in Greece, London in Britain, and Marin in San Francisco US? And to what degree the irreducible element of magic (the magical doors) serves the author to use his authority to highlight the current crisis of migration?

2- Magical Realism: A Brief History

The term "magic realism", "magical realism" or "marvelous realism" and its development has been too complex as the term faced many variations in the way of definition and usage by writers and critics differently. While searching for the origins of the term, the opinions of critics about the genealogy of the term have been divided. Franz Roh, considered the originator of the term by most of the historians. He was the first one who used magic realism with post-expressionism as a reaction to expressionism in expressing internal aspects of the psyche. In his essay *post-expressionism: magic realism* translated by Wendy Faris (1995, p. 24), he wrote: "when in violent reaction to this, expressionism had crystallized the object's exclusively internal aspect." Roh is talking about the magical realism moment, which

allows us to have the duality of looking at objects, the first one is the surface of the object and the other is internal.

Furthermore, Roh's representation of magic realism is notably concerned with technical aspects of painting and mostly different which indicated magic as new formation of the things and objects with emphasizing on clarity. Similarly, Hegerfeldt (2005, p. 13) presented the main differences between Roh's concept of magic and the current definition of magical realism: Firstly, magic for Roh refers to "the sense of newness with which quotidian reality is endowed through painterly emphasis on clarity and clinical detail." But now it refers to the opposite of realism. Secondly, Roh's magical realism tries to show that "every objects are endowed with a sense of mystery and unreality." While today's magical realism in literary works is accepted as an ordinary everyday occurrence and accepted by rationality, it springs from the naturalization of fantastic occurrences. (ibid, p. 60)

Magical realism as a mode of fiction originated in Latin America and started with Alejo Carpentier's (1904-1980) essay published in the newspaper *El Nacional* (1948) entitled "*De lo real maravilloso americano.*" (Marvelous American reality). It Later became a prologue to his novel *El reino de este mundo* Translated as *The Kingdom of this world* (1949) published in Mexico. According (Monegal, 1972 as cited by Angulo, 2015, p. 6) this essay will become a kind of manifesto for the new Latin American fiction'. Carpentier, (1995, p. 87) argued that marvelous real was "the heritage of all of America... found in every man"

Flores (1955, p. 112) as a critic has his claim to the origin and the definition of magical realism, He defined the term as "amalgamation of realism and fantasy." He added that "Latin America now possesses an authentic expression and transformed the common and every day into the awesome and the unreal." (ibid, 116) According to Flores, realism is blind alley which makes the writers during the First World War period such as Franz Kafka (1883-1924) and Marcel Proust (1871-1922), return to symbolism and magical realism, especially for Flores, Kafka labeled as a magical realist author since his writing style is more likely amalgamation of dream and reality.



Flores's point of view, however, is criticized by various scholars; most importantly Luis Leal, in his article (Magical Realism in Spanish American Literature) published in 1967. Leal attempted to refute Flores' vision about the definition of magical realism; the authors Flores include their names in the movement and the movement's starting point in Latin America in 1935. By stating that Kafka is not a magical realist author, his writings are more related to surrealism. Leal also refused to address Borges as the first one who used magical realism in Latin America, instead, he addressed Venezuelan author, journalist, intellectual, and lawyer Arturo Uslar Pietri (1906-2001) as the founder of Hispanic American magical realism, who used the term in his book *Letras y hombres de Venezuela* (The Literature and Men in Venezuela) in (1948), where he says: "What became prominent in the short story and left an indelible mark there was the consideration of man as a mystery surrounded by realistic facts" (Leal, 1967, p 120) then Alejo Carpentier has paid attention to this phenomenon.

Meanwhile, magical realism became the prominent characteristics of Latin American "Boom" (1967-1984) writers in 'third world' countries in the mid of twentieth century. Especially the term used by the authors from countries that had formerly been colonized as a tool to express and regain their cultural identity. Their messages were often directed against the colonization that took place in the time of their ancestors. Magical realism provides these writers with an entrance through which they present postcolonial discourse. The writers include: the Argentine Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986), Julio Cortázar (1914-1984) the Mexican Carlos Fuentes (1928-2012), and most notably by Colombian novelist, Nobel Prize winner for literature in 1983 Gabriel Garcia Marquez (1927-2014). With his famous novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), he brought magical realism to a very large of audiences.

Magical realism crossed from Latin America to different countries throughout the world. It was used by Anglophone postcolonial writers such as the Nigerian poet and novelist Ben Okri (1959-), The British-Indian novelist and essayist Salman Rushdie (1947-), and the American novelist, essayist, and editor Toni Morrison (1931-).



Gradually magical realism was recognized by women writers for different purposes, for instance, the Chilean Isabel Allende's (1942-) novel *House of the Spirits* (1979) and the Mexican Laura Esquivel's (1950-) *Like Water for Chocolate* (1989). They were powerful magical realist authors who focused on feminist issues and perceptions of reality. Latin America was indeed associated with magical realism; the term has not remained only in the context of this region. But it has become a global phenomenon used by various writers "to offer a vehicle for the expression of the tensions within different societal frameworks" (Hart, 2005, p. 17) all over the world. In early 1970 appeared in literature in the English language in Canada, United States, West Africa, South Africa, England, India, Australia, and New Zealand.

To sum up, magical realism is a debatable term among critics and historians; they have different opinions about the starting point of the term. Franz Roh in 1925 used the term to describe post-expressionist's painting and he was considered as the first one who used the term by the majority of the critics and men of letters. Then it developed by Latin American authors in 1940. In Hispanic America, as claimed by Luis Leal the Venezuelan author Arturo Uslar Pietri is listed to be the first to use the term magical realism in 1948. In 1949 the term was introduced by Carpienter in the prologue in his novel *The Kingdom of this World*, to assert that Latin America culturally inherited marvelous realism. Between the years 1967 to 1974 the term was examined by Latin America's 'Boom' writers, more specifically by writers of colonized, notably Gabriel Garcia Marquez, to express their sense of colonization and postcolonial nature of hybridity and duality. Nowadays, magical realism expanded globally and represented differently by writers, for example, Isabel Allende and Laura Esquivel use the term to emphasis feminist issues, Salman Rushdie and Ben Okri to address the postcolonial diaspora.

3- The Irreducible Element of Magic

Faris (2004, p. 7) introduces the binary opposition between realism and fantasy in *Ordinary Enchantments*, by proposing five primary elements of magical realism narrative techniques, in which the text was characterized by i) the irreducible

element, ii) unsettling doubts, iii) the phenomenal world, iv) merging realms and, v) the distortion of time, space and identity. The irreducible element constitutes a magical realist text, Young and Hollaman (1984, p. 4) assert that "in a magical realist story there must be an irreducible element, something that cannot be explained by logic, familiar knowledge, or received belief". Moreover, Faris defines the irreducible element as an event occurs that "cannot be explained according to the laws of the universe as they are formulated according to Western empirically based discourse". (ibid, p. 7) in magical realist texts, we encounter the antinomy between the natural and the supernatural on the level of textual representation. The reader judges the two conflicting logical codes on the semantic level suspend of what is rational and what is irrational in the fictitious world.

Exit West contains an "irreducible element" of magic in which magical doors are introduced by the narrator when the city was surrounded by violence. People vanished without having any idea "if they were alive or dead" (Hamid, 2017, p. 66) a window became "a border through which death was possibly most likely to come" (ibid, p. 68), and people look for a way to cross them from this "death trapped city". In the middle of this chaos: "Rumors had begun to circulate of doors that could take you elsewhere [...] A normal door, they said could become a special door, and it could happen without warning, to any door at all." (ibid, p. 69-70) This cannot be accepted according to Western logical laws of physical world, but these magical doors are accepted by the protagonists and most of the other characters. Even the author encourages the reader to accept the phenomenon by having other characters hesitate over it: "people thought these rumors to be nonsense, the superstitions of the feeble-minded." (ibid, p. 70)

The author has properly assimilated the irreducible element into the realistic textual environment, this makes it accepted by the narrator and characters rarely causing any comment: "most people began to gaze at their own doors a little differently nonetheless." (Hamid, 2017, p. 70) This acceptance is modeled for the readers and their realistic expectations, as Faris (2014, p. 7) claimed "the reader has difficulty marshaling evidence to settle questions about the status of events and

characters in such fictions" but it seems that the writer has his/her aim in proposing the irreducible element in the text.

4- Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* and the Issues of Migration

Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* was published in (2017) by Riverhead Book Publishing Company in New York. As soon as it was published, the novel became critically and commercially successful. The novel has tackled the current issue of the global refugee crisis; it comes from Hamid's personal experience since he introduced himself as a hybridized and mongrelized person in the introduction to his collection of essays on his life, art and politics, entitled *Discontent and Its Civilisations*:

Mongrel. Miscegenator. Half-breed. Outcast. [...] Our words for hybridity are so often epithets. They shouldn't be. Hybridity needs not be the problem. It could be the solution. Hybrids do more than embody mixtures between groups. Hybrids reveal the boundaries between groups to be false. And this is vital, for creativity comes from intermingling, from rejecting the lifelessness of purity. (Hamid, 2014, p. xvii)

Hamid states that hybridity is not a problem as the world is fundamentally intolerant to people like him, even creativity comes from hybridity. But today's world of borders, walls, and natives sentiment has worried Hamid; therefore, he believes that "the transient nature of human life, migration is the starting point for everybody." (Hamid, *Lit Hub*, 2017)

Mohsin Hamid (1971-) novelist and essayist, was born in Lahore, Pakistan, he spent about half his life there and much of the rest in London, New York, and California. Hamid is a graduate of creative writing from Princeton in 1993 and Harvard Law School in 1997. He was taught by both famous authors: Joyce Carol Oates and Toni Morrison whose ideas influenced Hamid as a novelist. He published four novels, *Moth Smoke* (2000), *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013), and *Exit West* (2017), and a book of essays, *Discontent and Its Civilizations* (2014). Hamid's writings are marked by turmoil:

I have lived in Pakistan during its recent and most intense period of terrorist activity and drone strikes, in London during the years on either side of the 2005 public transport bombings, and in New York in the era that came to an end with the attacks on the World Trade Center of 2001. (Hamid 2014: xv)

So his literature centered both Eastern and Western material and political realities which seldom written about such as, the experience of immigrants living abroad, life in Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian countries. Desai (2000) believed Hamid's work fills the gap that has been empty in contemporary publication; she wrote a critical essay of his first novel, *Moth Smoke*, arguing that no one could really write about things that Hamid pointed out such as, "the slow seasonal changes, the rural backwaters, gossip courtyards, and traditional families in a world taken over by gun-running, drug-trafficking, large scale industrialism, commercial entrepreneurship, tourism, new money night clubs, and boutiques."

The *Reluctant Fundamentalist* turned into a film by Mira Nair addressed Pakistani immigrant living in New York around the time of 11/9 by which Hamid "negotiates the legacy of colonialism in a postcolonial world and dramatizes the subtle impasses that can characterize exchange across permeable spatial, cultural, social and religious divides". (Stein, 2017, p.157) In *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* Hamid focused on a single unnamed city in the developing world tackled the function of urban capitalism and industrialization "underlying issues and problems of global capitalism not on racial or ethnic divides, but on economic and social access" (Scott, 2014, p. 56)

Hamid's fourth novel, *Exit West* is a response to the migrant crisis in different parts of Europe as Hamid pointed out and reveal the most important contemporary features of immigrants life, such as the rise of nativism and immigrants' discrimination, especially those who treated immigrants like animals and caged them in camps. The novel deals with "the temporary nature of our being-ness, and our shared sorrow, the heartache we each carry" (Hamid, 2017, p. 202)

Exit West opens in the unnamed city which is "swollen by refugees but still mostly at peace" (Hamid, 2017, p. 1) Saeed, an adman, meets Nadia, an insurance agent, in an evening class on corporate identity and product branding and fall in love. Although "it might seem odd that in cities teetering at the edge of the abyss young people still go to class" (ibid, p. 1), the narrator continues "but that is the way of things, with cities, as with life, for one moment we are pottering about our errands as usual and next we are dying" (ibid, p. 1) The couple lived in a city that a part of it was governed by religious militants and the other by government. Violence is a typical part of their city as the country faced civil war. There were political turmoil and physical violence with public execution, dropping bombs that exploded "with awesome power that brought to mind the might of nature itself." Saeed's mother is killed in her car by "a stray heavy-caliber round [...] taking with it a quarter of [her] head" (ibid, p. 72), in the city where people vanished and no one knows if they were alive or dead.

In the middle of these violent scenes, magical doors are appeared to take characters from this death trap of a country to somewhere safer, like Narnia's wardrobe. But instead of appearing in magical land characters appear in the realistic country. The doors are described as normal doors of kitchens, bedrooms, and bathrooms can suddenly become magical vortexes which can transport people from one country to another. Eventually, the couple decided to move on to different parts of the world, from unnamed city to Mykonos in Greece, then to London and lastly to Marin in San Francisco through multiple magical doors and also they face multiple changes in their relationship as well as their personalities.

The Magical doors did not only transport Saeed and Nadia, the protagonists of the novel. There were different anonymous characters from various parts of the world that could emerge from these portals to other countries. They are described in a magically realistic details, for instance, two Filipina women emerge from a disused door at the rear of a bar in Tokyo. A Brazilian Portuguese wrinkled man with Dutch elderly man pass through the black doors to Teresa, in Rio de Janeiro. A Tamil family wanders out of an interior service door below a cluster of "bond-and glass" luxury

towers in Dubai. A young woman slips out of a black door in a Tijuana cantina, and a man with "dark skin and dark, wooly hair" struggles out of a closet door in Sydney.

Additionally, Hamid aims to make the reader believe that "we are all migrants through time" (Hamid, 2017, p. 209) whether we migrate physically or not. Even if we stay our entire life in the same place or house and never travel, we cannot help it, we are changed and everything changes by the passage of time. He exemplified an elderly woman who lived in her family home in Palo Alto:

Every year someone was moving out and someone is moving in, and now all these doors from who knows where were opening, and all sorts of strange people were around, people who looked more than at home than she was, [...], and when she went out it seemed to her she too had migrated, that everyone migrates, even if we stay in the same house our whole lives, because we can't help it. We are all migrants through time. (ibid, p. 209)

It seems that the author's opinion about migration is different. He believes in the universality of migration, the future world is on the move. As to Saeed and Nadia "the whole planet was on the move, much of the global south headed to the global north, but also southerners moving to other southern places and northerners moving to other northern places." (ibid, p.167) There are possibilities for everyone to become a refugee, therefore, would become migrant one day or you will become migrants through time! In an interview for *Rumpus* (2017) Hamid makes this point clear by saying that we should move away from the idea of some people being migrants and others not being migrants, but we should begin with the inevitability of migration and how it actually unites us. *Exit West* presents a literary image of our contemporary world, we are all migrants through time, no matter how the government tries hard; they can never close the doors. The novel is about anyone who forced by any circumstances to leave their country and everything behind, who step through doors without having any idea of what happening throughout the other side of the door.

5- The Purpose of the Irreducible Element in *Exit West*



The irreducible element is born out of detailed narrative realism. But what is the purpose of this element? Faris (2004, p. 9) believes that "magical images or events, glowing alluringly from within the realistic matrix, often highlight central issues in a text." Besides, the irreducible element is valuable because it gives the author another door in revealing cultural, political, and historical realities.

Hamid used irreducible element effectively in *Exit West*. He bypasses what journalism and nonfiction show, the mass migration journey by small boats and what happened to these people. It opens a space for Hamid to tell a larger tale of migration strengthens discussions of present fears and experiences of immigrants before and after immigration. For Hamid, the focus on immigrants' journey is only a tiny part of the experience, whereas, the big part is the life you had before and the life you have after that, he focuses on social outcomes of migration; what it feels like when it happens to you?

Camayd-Freixas believed that "among the essential criteria of magical realism is the reader's simultaneous adoption of a literal and an allegorical perspective." (cited in Faris, 2004, p. 21) The title is symbolic, Hamid uses the word exit instead of going because the border-crossing disappears becomes magical portals and could happen to any normal doors, people are not choosing which place to go because they want to escape and exit from the death trapped city.

Exit West mostly addresses our contemporary world of war, anti-migrant, and dislocation. It covers many current and controversial topics, such as, the mass movements of people who choose to escape their country because of civil war or financial crisis and poverty. The rise of nativism that rejected migrants, shutting borders by rich countries to keep refugees out and the world's political climate. In Q&A session on PBS, Hamid explained the reason of choosing magical doors in *Exit West*, for him the doors have symbolized the magic of technology such as the black rectangle of our smartphones and computer screens can transfer us mentally as fast as our body:

So, right now, most of us have a little black rectangle in our pocket [...]. And when we look at it, our consciousness goes far, far away from our bodies, like magically appearing somewhere else, looking at your phone, and suddenly you're reading about the moon or Mars or Antarctica. (Hamid, *PBS News Hour* 2018)

Magical doors represent the technological advancement in *Exit West*. They are used symbolically to serve as an alternative way for people from poor or developed countries to cross borders of richer countries. They transport various people from different parts of the world to the west; it could be an answer for those countries that barring immigrants to cross their borders by showing that no matter how you try hard, you have never succeeded in closing borders. Hamid (2017) asserts that "the notion that some people are deemed less worthy of being able to move [...] over time that's going to seem as outmoded and as unfair, really as racial discrimination or other kinds of discrimination." The world is created for all, people have the right choice where they want to live because no one chooses the place of his/ her birth, as Hamid states "location, location, location, estate agents say. Geography is destiny, respond the historians." (Hamid, 2017, p. 9)

In *Exit West* "The doors of richer destinations, were heavily guarded but [...] the doors from poorer places, were mostly left unsecured." Hamid purposely pointed to the reason of leaving doors of poorer countries unbanned, he writes "perhaps in the hope that people would go back to where they come from – although almost no one ever did- or perhaps because there were simply too many doors from too many poorer places to guard them all." (Hamid, 2017, p. 101) Arguably, Saeed and Nadia emigrated from unnamed city to Mykonos in Greek, London in Britain, and Marin San Francisco / US; each city symbolically addresses the current realities against migration and migrants:

Firstly, magical doors are in part work against the dishonesty of most of media and journalism showing immigrants' life in the camps. They are maximizing the pictures on how people are crossing the borders, what difficulties they will face on the seas and roads. Hamid (2017) believed that "the focus on stories on the rafts,

people crossing in rafts, allow us to willfully blind ourselves to the story of why they are coming and what happened when they arrive?" *Exit West* is another important piece of immigrants' story that sometimes being omitted and magical doors allow the author to depict the large tale of migration in a small sized book.

The unnamed city where Saeed and Nadia were lived could be any contemporary world of war and dislocation. The city is described as a normal city where people live their normal life. Saeed's parents met each other at the cinema but "the cinema where Saeed's parents met was long gone the time their son met Nadia." (Hamid, 2017, p. 11) Soon after the city faced the reality of war:

Neighborhoods fell to the militants in starting 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, with patches of government land and patches of militant land. The frayed seams between the patches were the most deadly spaces, and to be avoided at all costs. Her butcher and the man who dyed the fabrics from which she had once made her festive clothes disappeared into such gaps, their places of business shattered and covered in rubble and glass. (ibid, p. 66)

The city is unrecognizable by Saeed's mother because everything has changed. The land is divided into two parts, one of it governed by governments and the other by militants. Moreover, there is always the conflict between these two authorities. People are likely to disappear between these two authorities. In this time of war and conflict, people react differently, some of them decided to immigrate like Saeed and Nadia despite the difficulties that they face, others choose to remain and accept the violence of war, like Saeed's father. The Journey of Saeed and Nadia is easy by using magical doors, whereas, the outcome of this journey is displacement and trauma. In Hamid's case, the migrant's trauma has actual autobiographical roots, as he declares:

I have been migrating my whole life, so, in a way, I suppose I was always going to write at some point a novel about migration. So the experience of migration and the emotional pain and confusion that comes from it, I think, do in a way come from me. (Hamid, *PBS News Hour* 2018).

The first exit point of Nadia and Saeed was to Mykonos in Greek Island, When Nadia first found herself lying in the floor, and then coupled with Saeed saw a camp in Mykonos where "everyone was foreign and so, in a sense, no one was. [...] a great draw for tourists in the summer, and, it seemed, a great draw for migrants this winter" (Hamid, 2017, pp. 100-101). The narrator indirectly suggests that most of the refugees belong to Asian, African continents but not to white imperial countries by referring to their skin color as various shades of brown when the narrator speaks about the refugees in Mykonos, he/she writes, they [Nadia and Saeed] walked away from the beach club and on the lee of a hill "they saw what looked like a refugee camp, with hundreds of tents and lean-tos and people of many colours and lives-many colours and lives but mostly falling within a band of brown that ranged from dark chocolate to milky tea" (ibid, p. 100). Hamid has written this scene inspired by the huge arrival of Syrian refugees. At that time, *The Spectator* article entitled *Mykonos has turned into hell* (2015) Taki wrote:

Since the beginning of the year, about 100,000 migrants have arrived via Turkey [...] A Brussels bureaucrat by the name of Vincent Cochetel [...] has criticized Greece for not doing enough. 'Wake up and do more,' said the bureaucrat [...]. But how can an island of 35,000 inhabitants take in 40,000 refugees and provide for them?

Hamid's representation of Mykonos is as realistic as Taki pointed to, where thousands of refugees live in a camp, in tents outside the city, and of course, it is up to the government to provide essential needs for them, while their numbers are bigger than Mykonos' inhabitants. In these camps, some migrants are robbing others while others guarding them against being robbed. The description of refugees' life is a realistic literary representation of the hard times endured by refugees.

Secondly, Hamid reversed colonization by overpopulating the West with migrants from all over the world. "This oxymoronic strategy suggests a binary opposition between the representational code of realism and that, roughly, of fantasy." (Slemon, 1988, p. 10) The magical doors allow mass people enter a place in a matter of seconds. Saeed and Nadia passed through a door from Mykonos to



London by helping a volunteer local girl who Nadia befriended. When it became dark, they were followed by "a dozen Nigerians, later a few Somalis, a family from the borderlands between Myanmar and after the silencing of Thailand. More and more and more." (Hamid, 2017, p. 120)

In his chapter on Magic Realism as Post-colonial Discourse, Slemon writes that colonization and rule of the European powers are affected the areas from Asia: "the foreshortening of history so that the time scheme of the novel metaphorically contains the long process of colonization and its aftermath" (Slemon 1988: 12). Hamid is pointed to the colonization Slemon mentions:

All over London, houses and parks and disused lots were being peopled in this way, some said by a million migrants, some said by twice as that. It seemed the more empty a space in the city the more it attracted squatters, with unoccupied mansions in the borough of Kensington and Chelsea particularly hard-hit, their absentee owners often discovering the bad news too late to intervene, and similarly the great expenses of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, filling up with tents and rough shelters, such that it was now said that between Westminster and Hammersmith legal residents were a minority, and native-born ones vanishingly few, with local newspapers referring to the area as the worst of the black holes in the fabric of the nation. (Hamid, 2017, p. 126)

Hamid shows a dystopian London was occupied by immigrants, Brexit vote and the recrudescence of far-right ideologies are real consequences effects Hamid chooses to augment. Authorities reacted in the area that was occupied by migrants by cutting off electricity and leaving the migrants in darkness, this makes a poetic division between "dark London" and "light London". This makes Saeed and Nadia or other migrants imagine restaurants and black cabs in the light London, while they are living with fights, murders, rapes, and assaults. Migrants soon attacked by 'nativist mobs' movements will build to "reclaim Britain for Britain". For Saeed and Nadia nothing is changed except buildings and faces because around this zone [dark London] were soldiers and armored vehicles, and above it were drones and



helicopters, and inside it were Nadia and Saeed, all of these realities are familiar to them since they had run from war already. They began to ask whether they had done anything by moving, and now did not know where next to run. (ibid, p. 135) the city where Nadia and Saeed were escaped has relocated in London.

Thirdly, "Saeed and Nadia decided at some point —to give up their position on the housing list and all they had built [in London]" (Hamid, 2017, p. 189) and step for the third time through a magical door to Marin, California, a small city near San Francisco. The narrator describes Marin as a place which was better than other places that Saeed and Nadia migrated. "In Marin there were almost no natives, these people have died out or been exterminated long ago, and one would see them only occasionally." (ibid, p. 195) Hamid believed that the "Native America" is not a correct term, instate, one could use "First Americans" for nobody is really a native American "even the people we think of as indigenous, the pre-Columbian population of America, are migrants" (Hamid, for *Rumpus*, 2017), therefore, America is the land of migrants. Magical doors are a response to those who banned people from some specific countries to immigrate to America.

In January 2017, American President, Donald Trump signed a travel ban and banned seven Muslim-majority countries to travel to the United States. First travel restrictions on Iran, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Somalia, this makes the ban known as Muslim-ban, but it was then extended to include people from three more countries: North Korea, Venezuela, and Chad. The president's stated purpose was "to protect the Nation from terrorist activities," (Sherman, 2017). For people like me, Hamid claimed "it is a sort of heartbreak" since he has lived 17 years in the US. Hamid continued to say in *Late Night* programme with Seth Myers:

What's happened now is we've been made so frightened of people and the travel ban is an example of that. Let's just take a whole bunch of people and treat them as though they are [all this] horrible frightening thing. And the process to throws away our commitment to equality and decency. (Hamid, for *Late Night with Seth Myers*, 2017)

The ban was soon protested by people especially immigrants. They gathered at airports around the US. People also protested outside the White House, in the capital Washington DC. The novel was shortly published after the announcement of the travel ban. Magical doors transport migrants without accepting the rules and bans. In his essay to Guardian, Hamid cited Emma Lazarus's *The New Colossus* (1883) the poem embossed in metal letters on the Statue of Liberty: "Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me", magical doors imagine a world where the philosophy behind these lines and people allow to immigrate against Trump's law of travel ban and a door can transfer a wave of humanity in "I lift my lamp beside the golden door" Lazarus's poem ended. (Livingstone, 2017) Generally speaking, magical doors in *Exit West* which could take you elsewhere become portals while people move freely as they please around the planet Earth. They stand against all boundaries and man-made borders. The central symbol in using these magical doors as Hamid believed is the advancements of technology that would allow the body to move as fast as the mind.

6- Conclusion

"We are all migrants through time", says the narrator of *Exit West* (p. 209), this line summarizes the author's message throughout the novel which challenges the audience to reframe their experience about migration in a new context. Migration, for Hamid, is not adjusting any changes, rather than it is an inevitability we should learn to accept. We need to constantly accept change as a part of human being's world whether we move through space or not, we are changing through time.

A world without or with porous borders in *Exit West* protects migration as a human right, no matter how west closes the borders and doors to prevent migrants in their country, but still, there is a door, a magical door, that can decode all political and social boundaries for those who have the right to move. *Exit West* is written against the past nostalgic political forces against the minority and subgroups of people. The novel portrays the microcosm of the contemporary, fast changing world. It restricts the bound of what was and what is and steps toward what could be. In *Exit West*, Hamid tries to propose a solution for refugees' crisis that can only be dealt with



a direct confrontation of the realities of neo colonialism and a borderless world. A world without borders, Hamid believes, is what the world and the future generations demand of us now.

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پوخته:

کۆچکردن و کیشی په نابه‌ران په کیکه له گرافته سه‌ره‌کیه‌کانی جیهان له‌م سه‌رده‌مه دا. ژماره‌یه‌کی زۆر له په نابه‌ران خواستی ئه‌وه‌یان هه‌یه که سنووری ولاته‌ئه‌ورووپیه پیشکه‌وتوو‌ه‌کان بېرن، وه‌له‌ه‌مان کاتیشدا، ولاته ئه‌ورووپیه‌کان ریگی جۆراو جۆر ده‌گرته بهر بۆ دوورخستنه‌وه‌ی په نابه‌ران له سنووره‌کانی خۆیان، ئه‌مه‌ش ده‌بیتته هۆی دروست بوونی ترس و دله‌ راوکۆ له‌ناو په نابه‌ران. رۆمانووس موحسین حه‌مید له رۆمانی (ده‌چیه‌ی رۆژئاوا) که سالی (2017) بڵاوی کردۆته‌وه ته‌نگ و چه‌له‌مه‌کانی په نابه‌ران ده‌خاته روو، وه‌هه‌ولێ چاره‌سه‌رکردنی ده‌دات له ریگی به‌کاره‌ینانی ده‌رگای جادووییه‌وه که په نابه‌ران ده‌گوازیتته‌وه بۆ هه‌ر شوینیکی دنیا که بیانه‌وی کۆچی بۆ بکه‌ن. نووسه‌ر ئه‌م ده‌رگا جادووییه‌یه پیشیار ده‌کات که سنووره‌کان ده‌یریت به‌بێ به‌ر به‌ست وه‌کو هۆکارێک بۆ پاراستنی مافی په نابه‌ران. له‌م رۆمانه‌دا حه‌مید ژیا‌نی په نابه‌ران وێنا ده‌کات له جیهانیکی پر شه‌رو ئاژاوه. ئه‌م تیزینه‌وه‌یه ئامانجی نووسه‌ر ده‌خاته روو له به‌کاره‌ینانی ریالیزمی جادوویی له چاره‌سه‌رکردنی کیشی ئه‌م سه‌رده‌مه‌ی په نابه‌ران.

هدف محسن حمید فی استخدام ابواب سحرية فی روايته (الهجرة غرباً)

الملخص:

الهجرة العالمية وازمة اللاجئين تعد من المشكلات الطارئة التي تواجه العالم المعاصر. هنالك عدد كبير من اللاجئين الذين يسعون الى تجاوز حدود الدول الاوروبية المتقدمة ولكن في ذات الوقت تلك الدول الاوروبية ومسؤوليها تسعى لابعاد اللاجئين عن حدودها مما يسبب المخاوف والرهاب لدى اللاجئين. يتناول الكاتب الروائي محسن حميد في روايته (الهجرة غرباً) التي نشرها في سنة (2017) هذه التحديات بالتفصيل وي طرح حل خارق للمشكلة والذي هو عبارة عن ابواب سحرية تنقل اللاجئين الى اي مكان في العالم في ظرف ثواني. يقترح الكاتب الابواب السحرية التي تمثل عالم بلا حدود حماية لحقوق اللاجئين كحقوق الانسان. يقدم الكاتب لوحة روائية ترسم معاناة اللاجئين في عالم تجتاحه الحروب. اذاً هذا البحث يسعى لايضاح مساعي الكاتب في استخدام حلول خارقة وسحرية لحل مشكلة اللاجئين التي تمثل ازمة عالمية.