

I. Displacement and Dislocation in Hamid's *Exit West*

This research studies Mohsin Hamid's novel *Exit West* (2017) from the perspective of postcolonial criticism. The researcher argues that the characters Saeed and Nadia as immigrants, refugees and exiles fall under one of the five flows: i.e. 'ethnoscapes' described by Arjun Appadurai in "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy" in *Theory, Culture & Society* (1990). By ethnoscapes, Appadurai means the movement or flow of people across boundaries for multiple reasons. As the characters move from one country to another, their wanderings and movements reveal the in-betweenness and thus dislocation and rootlessness of people in the modern globalized world as described by Homi K. Bhabha. So, in order to analyze the rootless, in-betweenness and hybridized situation of the migrant characters Saeed and Nadia, the researcher draws theoretical insight from the criticism of Appadurai and Bhabha.

In *Exit West* Saeed and Nadia, as migrants, become fluid and mobile individuals and thus fall in the state of in-betweenness as they move from one country to another and one culture to another. Their feeling of insecurity begins when Nadia and Saeed first fall in love in a fictional unnamed city. They first feel a sense of rootlessness and displacement when the bullets begin to be fired near where they have been living so far. The circling of fighter jets in the sky, and curfews add to the spread of violence. At this backdrop, they leave their country, leaving behind their home, culture and most important of all their loved ones.

Through this novel, Hamid portrays an alien and uncertain future of the migrants struggling to create an identity in different places. Saeed and Nadia pass through different surroundings and they struggle for survival for identity in a totally different world. In this way, the writer pays attention to describe the emotions of exiled people. As they are surrounded by other refugees,

Nadia and Saeed try to establish their places and identity in the world, putting up different responses to their circumstances. However, they end up being uprooted individuals.

In course of moving from one place to another place, Saeed and Nadia migrate to London. As more migrants migrate to London, hostility between the migrants and the natives increases, including attacks and mob rule. The migrants are placed into places with minimal food and electricity called "Dark London". After a raid to clear out migrants goes wrong, the natives decide to try to work together with the new migrants and put them to work clearing the land for Halo London, a city surrounding London-proper, with the promise that they will be given 40 meters and a pipe i.e. a small plot of land and access to utilities. Nadia and Saeed engross in work as they feel themselves moving apart from each other.

Although they are able to find home, Nadia and Saeed leave through another way and they eventually take their chance to arrive in California. They find they are generally welcome there and Nadia finds work at a food co-op while Saeed becomes more and more religious. Eventually, realizing that they no longer have any feelings for one another, Nadia leaves Saeed and moves into a room at the co-op, forming a relationship with a cook who works there. Saeed, meanwhile, marries the native-born daughter of a preacher. He becomes a global citizen adopting alien culture of his wife. Fifty years later, Nadia returns to the country of her birth and meets up with Saeed, who offers to take her one day to see the stars in Chile.

This thesis attempts to look at the connection and conflict between rootlessness and rootedness in the novel *Exit West*. The main characters are in such a condition that they neither fully adopt foreign culture nor could forget their native culture. The situation of in-betweenness emerges in their life. So, this thesis deals with the conflict between being rootlessness and

rootedness within the main characters who are in such a situation that they could neither alter the critical situation nor live happy being rootlessness condition.

This novel tells a lot about the contemporary contexts of dislocation, where the issues of root culture are in crisis because from different countries are mixed up due to globalization. The main characters of this novel Nadia and Saeed are in the condition of in-betweenness despite the fact that they escape from their birthplace through fictional doors. So, the journey of immigrants' from rootedness to rootlessness is shown through the novel *Exit West*.

Review of Literature

Hamid's novel *Exit West* (2017) has elicited a host of criticism from various critics. The novel has attracted attention of many as it has dealt with the current pressing issue facing the migrant people. Refugee crisis in the last few years of the present century has assumed such vast proportions which find parallels only during the World War II. The world is witnessing millions of people undertaking arduous journeys to escape their war torn countries of origin. Economic instability and deadly conflicts are forcing innumerable people to leave their homes in search of better lives. So, the novel depicts inevitable migration of people across countries, even across continents, when societies descend into chaos and conflict. As *Exit West* depicts the plight of refugees in their war ravaged countries by specially focusing on a city torn apart by civil war, Manzoor Ahmad Mirargues, "Keeping the city unnamed is a way of universalizing the predicament of refugees. The novel uses the unusual but very clever teleportation device of black doors to transport people across different places instantly" (3). This shows how Hamid poignantly raised the issue of the complexities of migration.

The novel tells the story of Saeed and Nadia, citizens of a troubled country that's falling apart. Amid the raging conflict they meet, engage in cautious nighttime flirtations and fall into

something approximating love. But as war increasingly makes life miserable, the young couple decides to flee their native land. They hear about a series of "doors" that pop up in unpredictable places around the city. The doors lead elsewhere in the world, the exact locations unknowable until the traveller has walked past the threshold. But driven to desperation by violence, radicalization, self- and state-imposed silence, Saeed and Nadia decide to risk it. Even the unknown is preferable to ruin. Jillian Edelstein remarks:

I thought about him (the novelist) for the first time in decades while reading *Exit West*, the quietly exquisite new novel from Mohsin Hamid. A masterpiece of humanity and restraint, it is an antidote to the cruelty of a present in which those who leave the places of their birth seeking a better life are routinely demonized, imprisoned or left to die. But at the novel's core is something more fundamental than the whims of politics – an exploration of human needs so universal, they elevate *Exit West* from a product of our time to something timeless. (5)

Here, Edelstein views *Exit West* as a superb work of art which documents the miseries of immigrants and their struggle for survival in new surroundings. So, setting aside the political leanings, the novel raises immigrants' issues.

The adventure of the characters mixed with hardships as refugees is remarkable. Sophie Gilbert writes, “As their relationship develops, their city experiences a series of incremental changes, each one manageable individually, but catastrophic in total. Once at night, gazing through the telescope on their balcony, Saeed’s family hears gunshots in the distance”(11) as she further claims:

Then helicopters and drones begin to swarm in the sky. Militants take over the stock exchange, but are gunned down by the government, with considerable

collateral loss of life. Then the militants begin arriving in the city in unexpected numbers, taking over territory. There are air strikes and bombs. Cellphones suddenly lose their signal, and all internet is shut off. Municipal services shut down, meaning there's no electricity or running water. There are purges of people with certain surnames and denominations. (7)

The above passage documents the immigrants' compulsion behind leaving their native land. So, the novel shows how domestic violence forces people to abandon their home, family and society rendering them homeless and thus rootless.

As the militants successfully wrest control of the city from the government and violence becomes an everyday part of life, Nadia and Saeed begin chasing rumours that there are doors in the city that serve as portals to other locations. Although militants guard most of the doors, they manage to bribe their way through a door, leaving behind Saeed's father who does not wish to be a burden to them and asks Nadia to promise him never to leave Saeed until they are settled. Sukhdev Sandhu argues:

Exit West, a novel about migration and mutation, full of wormholes and rips in reality, begins as it mostly doesn't go on. A man and a woman meet at an evening class on corporate identity and product branding. Saeed is down-to-earth, the son of a university professor, and works at an ad agency. Nadia, who wears a full black robe and is employed by an insurance company, lives alone, rides a motorbike, enjoys vinyl and psychedelic mushrooms. She doesn't pray. We think we know what will happen next: a boy-girl love story, opposites attracting, secular individuals struggling with the shackles of a theological state. (9)

The door they go through takes them to Mykonos, where they are among many refugees and settle in a tent city. They eventually obtain compassion of a local Greek girl who has a rapport with Nadia and helps the two go through a recently discovered door which leads to a luxury home in London.

Nadia and Saeed and other migrants settle in the home, claiming it from its owners. Michiko Kakutani opines:

The first half of their story is about how war warps everyday life; the second half, a tale of globalization and its discontents. Writing in spare, crystalline prose, Hamid conveys the experience of living in a city under siege with sharp, stabbing immediacy. He shows just how swiftly ordinary life — with all its banal rituals and routines — can morph into the defensive crouch of life in a war zone, with fears of truck bombs and sniper fire and armed soldiers at checkpoints becoming a daily reality, along with constant surveillance from drones and helicopters. He also captures how insidiously violence alters the calculus of daily life. (6)

In the same way, the above extract describes how Hamid deals with the volatile situation in the area where the novel begins first. The soldiers are seen equipped with arms at several checkpoints, trucks with ammunitions patrol the city.

According to William Giraldi, the Pakistani-born Mohsin Hamid's fourth novel, *Exit West* takes the current Middle Eastern migrant crisis and injects wizardry, an allegorical urgency that declares this book's intention to be art. In an unnamed city about to be wrecked by war, the two students Nadia and Saeed begin a romance. With its decisive rhythm, its faint suggestion of mythos, the first line sets the pitch of this novel: "In a city swollen by refugees but still mostly at

peace, or at least not yet openly at war, a young man met a young woman in a classroom and did not speak to her" (11).

InderpreetKaur regards *Exit West* as an autobiographical one as he views that the novel has talked about the problems of Mohsin Hamid. Few novels tell the story about refugee conditions. It deals with refugee crisis at the global level. Kaur notes:

The novel is autobiographical in nature, reflecting his sense of displacement from one place to another. Born in Lahore, Pakistan moved to California at the age of 3, travelling through Sydney, then came back to Lahore again, his coming and going forms an inevitable part of his life. (2)

This condition of dislocation has been depicted in his other works as well. The novel has analyzed the number of ways in which the author has described how difficult it is to bear a migrant experience in one's life. Such fiction and non-fiction constitute major themes about the crisis of Middle-Eastern refugees.

These reviews have shown the novel as one of the most receptive texts now in the Western academic world. Lots of issues can be found in the novel. But, this researcher is more interested about their risk-taking journey from rootedness to rootlessness. So, this thesis tries to examine the condition of being rootless and hybridized situation of the characters in *Exit West* contrary to what the above mentioned critics have studied in the review of literature.

The major theoretical framework is drawn from postcolonial criticism of ArjunAppadurai andHomi K Bhabha. Appadurai sees disjuncture in global culture as a result of the flow of people, technology, finance, media and ideas across the globe. He says that the speed, scale and volume of each of these flows are now so great that the disjunctures have become central to the politics of global culture in the present world. In Appadurai's view, an "uncertain landscape has

been created in and through these junctures" (226). So, the cultural disjunctive processes in the globalized world go in different directions and cause ruptures, tensions or conflicts.

Similarly, Bhabha argues that hybridity results from various forms of colonization, which leads to cultural collisions and interchanges. In the attempt to assert colonial power in order to create anglicized subjects, "[t]he trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated as something different--a mutation, a hybrid" (111). Culture as a way of life or the historically transmitted patterns of meanings codified in symbol is vast in itself. The elements of culture such as –family relationship, marriage, love affairs, sexual means, attitude towards religion, attitude towards having children or attitudes, lifestyle and living standards are the main dominating elements. Homi Bhabha argues that culture acts as means of social survival for those who have undergone subjugation, domination, diaspora and displacement as it helps to create a symbolic textuality to give the alienating everyday an ‘aura’ of selfhood and a promise of pleasure. In other words, culture offers solace even though symbolically. So, Bhabha observes that culture is a “strategy of survival” (48) amidst dominant and powerful cultures as they possess the power to influence or dominate the other. This ‘strategy of survival’ helps to keep one alive and one’s identity intact. Similarly, Mathew Arnold regards culture as powerful means of differentiation. He says that culture is the “main agency of powerful differentiation within its domain and beyond too” (qtd in Said 9). Thus, culture helps people of different community to keep people’ separate identity in diaspora thereby helping them to live in a harmonious way.

Immigration is the most crucial elements behind the concept of diaspora. The concept of diaspora first originated through emigration but later on it developed into the form of its other extensive discourses like post colonialism, nationalism, hybridity, multiculturalism. Its concept has been derived from that of dispersal experiences of the ancient Jewish people of Israel in the

sixth century B.C. although in the present context, it has come to merge into the postcolonial theory. An Indian critic Sudhir Kumar points out about diasporic condition and experience in this way:

The diasporic consciousness, as some critic ever, presupposed the predominance of such feelings as alienation, dispersal, longing for the ancestral homeland, a double identification with the original homeland and the adopted country, identity crisis, remembering myths related to the homeland, protest against discrimination of all sorts in a new land etc. the metaphor of imaginary homelands does cum up the conditions of the diasporic communities well. (70)

Diasporic writing especially focuses on issues of migrants people. It is an outcome of their experience; the experiences which basically tells us stories of their lives, within their immigrants background. As immigrants resettle in the foreign lands, things do not seem easy to them because in the new horizon, they have faced a new scenario which is different from their own homeland. They find difficulties to adjust themselves in the culture, language, religion, customs, etc. They feel the sense of loss and sense of selfless identity. The migrated writers such as Hamid in the case of present study get their self identity through writing. Their writings are secure places to express their origin and target culture, which used to give them perfect identity.

The study has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter presents an introductory outline of the research work – a short introduction to Mohsin Hamid, the novel *Exit West* and the argument followed by a short critical response. The second chapter tries to analyze the text at a considerable length. It analyzes how Hamid shows his concern for the rootless, displaced and dislocated individuals in the contemporary world. It sorts out some extracts from the text as

evidence to prove hypothesis of the study. And finally the third chapter is conclusion of this research work.

II. Rootedness to Rootlessness in Hamid's *Exit West*

This section analyzes the journey of Saeed and Nadia from Rootedness to Rootlessness as the circumstances under which they live force them to move from one country to another in the postcolonial era. In course of their wanderings, they are dislocated and displaced and their sense of dislocation and rootlessness deepens as they move from their native land to different alien lands. So, by showing the wanderings and movements of Saeed and Nadia, Hamid portrays rootlessness of people in modern globalized world. In this way, this thesis explores the predicament of rootless and hybridized situation of migrant people from the perspectives of Appadurai's concept of global culture and Bhabha's idea of in-betweenness.

The novel, *Exit West* begins with two lovers, Saeed and Nadia's miserable and uncertain journey from the city fallen apart by domestic conflict to unknown countries. The turn of events that are going to take place is predicted in the very first sentence of the novel itself: "In a city swollen by refugees but still mostly at peace, or at least not yet openly at war, a young man met a young woman in a classroom and did not speak to her" (1). The couple leaves their home which is not yet ravaged by war and to which they still feel rooted or attached. The couple eventually becomes refugees when the city they live in becomes unlivable. In course of their movement, they travel to Greece, London and the USA in order to rebuild and secure their lives. But in the new socio-cultural surroundings, they end up being 'migrant refugees' and thus rootless as they fall under the category of Appadurai's concept of "ethnoscapes". One of five terms, ethnoscape is defined as the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and individuals constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of nations to a greater extent.

This study represents how the characters of *Exit West* as refugees escape through their native country to different alien land. Their journey represents significantly and most clearly the

'escape', the exit, continuously moving further west, starting from Mykonos, further to London and ending as far west in the western regions, in San Francisco, California, as they possibly can. In addition, the specification of west represents a commercial destination and stands opposite to the abandoned, cohesive and unified Eastern world. Hamid writes:

[Saeed and Nadia] were on the Greek Island of Mykonos, a great draw for tourists in the summer, and, it seemed, a great draw for migrants this winter, and that the doors out, which is to say the doors to richer destinations, were heavily guarded, but the doors in, the doors from poorer places, were mostly left unsecured (101)

Here, Hamid delves into distinction between east and west. He continues to write how the eastern doors are in too great a numbers to secure. There are too many doors connecting to poorer places whereas it is difficult to enter or exit from richer countries.

In his essay, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy" Arjun Appadurai has argued that the process of globalization displaces migrants as it creates a disjuncture instead of connectedness within a heterogeneous community. Contrary to Anderson's argument of "imagined communities" as a key perspective of shaping modern nationhood and nationalism, Appadurai views that in the current globalization process print capitalism, media and technologies do not bring common imaginaries to global citizens but instead have disjoined modernist perspectives of nationhood and national identity. According to him, globalization forces "transformed the world into a kind of 'no place', where 'ethnic', 'rhizomic' 'uncertainty', 'schizophrenic', 'rootlessness', and 'alienation' lead to psychological distances between individuals and groups" (29). This shows how post-colonial modernity and migration affect distinct cultural practices thereby uprooting the migrant people from their socio-cultural milieu. Appadurai perceives that the idea of "uprootedness" as disjuncture as he argues that imaginary

connection to the global world does not create sameness. Appadurai also says that film, media, sports, fashion, and other global institutions have provided new imaginaries to post-colonial nations, which he describes as a “new social fact” that influences people to cross various modernized national boundaries. This idea of disjuncture of globalization is associated with “fragmentation” and “integration” of people at the national, local, and individual levels.

Appadurai writes how in the process of globalization different dimensions play vital role, among which 'ethnoscapes' refers to the flows of people across the countries. The ways in which people move around whether as "tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers and other moving groups and persons constitute an essential features of the world" (218). The ethnoscape is constantly shifting, rearranging bonds of kinship, feelings of belonging. “The warp of stability”, as Appadurai calls it, “is everywhere shot through with the woof of human motion, as more persons and groups deal with the realities of having to move or the fantasies of wanting to move" (297). So, Appadurai views that globalization forces are not providing similar messages to different cultures and population groups but have disjoined the modernized boundaries of this world by producing a new “imaginary” space (30). In looking at the global movement of people what he calls “ethnoscapes” and diaspora populations in the current global world, global migrants in their attempt to secure their identity simulate their cultures and locations in global settings, disjoined from their localized imaginaries. This is a form of “deterritorialization” that reshapes global locations in the values of locals.

As Appadurai posits, global situation is interactive rather than singly dominated. Saeed and Nadi possibly from Indo-Pakistani location have been dispersed across national boundaries which are not singly dominated. They live outside their territories and recognize that their traditional homelands are reflected deeply in the languages they speak, religion they adopt, and

culture they produce. Moreover, the memory and nostalgia also deeply haunt them and make them feel lonely and isolated in the new territory.

Saeed and Nadia in diaspora are culturally displaced and forced into exile accepting plural and partial identity. They are always haunted by the sense of loss and rootlessness. For them, diasporic experiences are constantly producing and reproducing them a new identity through transformation. In the homeland, people enjoy freedom of choice in everything as Hamid nostalgically writes, "Back then people continued to enjoy the luxury of wearing more or less what they wanted to wear, clothing and hair wise, within certain bounds of course, and so these choices meant something" (1). For Hamid, there lies a difficulty in coming to terms with such situation and as such.

The novel *Exit West* reflects the plight of those migrants who have been compelled to leave their homeland due to multiple reasons. The two protagonists stand for every refugee in the modern world. In the novel, Hamid writes about a global world, without any geographical or cultural borders, where hybridity reigns, and the theme of cultural hybridity is strongly portrayed in the novel. Bhabha evokes the concept of global citizenship or transnationalism by positing that, "the territoriality of the global 'citizen' is, concurrently, postnational, denational or transnational" (30). As near the end of the novel, one of the characters confesses:

The world around us is changing and we too change with it, or migrate in time, even if we stay in the same place all our life. . . . And when she went out it seemed to her that she too had migrated, that everyone migrates, even if we stay in the same houses our whole lives, because we can't help it. We are all migrants through time.
(209)

This shows how the modern man has become a hybrid and nomadic as he is always on the move. At another point in the novel the narrator says: "That summer it seemed to Saeed and Nadia that 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" (167). This situation shows the condition of the migrants as having the status of rootlessness. As described by Appadurai because of the disjuncture and unstable interplay of commerce, media, national politics and consumer fantasies, "ethnicity, once a genie contained in the bottle of some sort of locality (however large) has now become a global force, forever slipping in and through the cracks between state and borders" (qtd. in Szeman 290). Nadia and Saeed live in a city "teetering on the abyss", filling up with refugees and prone to random violence (1). As they are portrayed as people on the move, Nadia and Saeed's hometown could be many places and they seem to assume multiple identities, which renders them dislocated and rootless.

As post-colonialism inquires how dislocated people suffer from the problem of social assimilation, it helps us to examine how Saeed and Nadia suffer from frustration and fragmentation in the novel. As a result of upheavals, they lose their self and suffer from dislocation. While this might seem paradoxical, the physical journey from one land to another is, for most refugees, the most dangerous and traumatic part because it lets Hamid focus instead on a different part of the refugee experience. The characters in the novel adapt themselves to different situations in unfamiliar places. Hamid describes their fleeing country as Hamid describes:

The following evening helicopters filled the sky like birds startled by a gunshot, or by the blow of an axe at the base of their tree. They rose, singly and in pairs, and fanned out above the city in the reddening dusk, as they slipped below the horizon, and the whirr of their rotors echoed through windows and down alleys, seemingly

compressing the air beneath them, as though each were mounted atop an invisible column, an invisible breathable cylinder, these odd, hawkish, mobile sculptures, some thin, with tandem canopies, pilot and gunner at different heights . . . (32)

Saeed and Nadia watch this looming dangerous situation from the rooftop and balcony. From this moment onwards, their journey of rootlessness begins as they find nothing to firmly set their feet on.

The feeling of displacement is caused by the absence of employees in the office where Saeed works because conversations mainly focus on "conspiracy theories, the status of the fighting, and plans to get out of the country" (50). It becomes next to impossible to get visas for non-wealthy people. And the situation is much the same at Nadia's workplace.

The dominant categorizations of human identities, such as race, culture, nationality, and community, are more fluid hybridglobal settings. Bhabha argues that migrants occupy space in transnational settings that is neither 'one' nor 'other' but something else that he refers to as a 'third space.' Thus, the construction processes of racial, ethnic, cultural and religious identities are contextual, situational and political in transnational and global settings. People move, shift and are being challenged. The third space is a virtual no-man's-land, it is located outside cultural territories and in-between what is perceived as belonging to the self and that what is perceived as the other. The constantly permeating boundaries create a liminal space, a space in-between.

The writer categorically describes the places and countries Saeed and Nadia travel through. This allows Hamid to make clear some of the more gloomily dislocated realities of migration. First they arrive on the Greek island of Mykonos, where thousands of refugees share space with wealthy tourists. As migrant travelers, Saeed and Nadia end up into a camp in Greek island, which they find as a "trading post" (101). In this group:

Everyone was foreign, and so, in a sense, no one was. Nadia and Saeed quickly located a cluster of fellow country women and – men and learned that they were on the Greek island of Mykonos, a great draw for tourists in the summer, it seemed, a great draw for migrants this winter, and that the doors out, which is to say the doors to richer destinations, were heavily guarded, but the doors in, the doors from poorer places, were mostly left unsecured. (100)

As migrants, Saeed and Nadia feel insecure in the camp as they find several women and men belonging to different cultures from their country and other countries, who warn them not to trust everybody in the camp. Saeed and Nadia therefore make sure to stay alert at night and when walking alone. This situation places them in "in-betweenness" of cultures of different people who have come into contact due to globalization.

When the city reaches emergency situation such as frequent raids, curfews, bullet firings, Saeed and Nadia search for the mystical doors to escape. An agent who speaks in whispers, like "a poet or a psychopath," guides them (87). "They knew there was a possibility this was the final afternoon of their lives," (91). They squeeze themselves in different vehicles through darkness and arrive in Greece, where they find a camp of refugees whose skin colours range from dark black to brown. Safe at last, they experience tiredness, weakness and bitterness in each other for the first time. They finally learn that the doors they have crossed have become a global system of exit and entry.

Another "door" takes them to London, where migrants begin moving into the countless empty houses purchased by foreign nationals in the center of town. As Hamid writes, "It was now said 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" (56). And since the doors work in both directions, he suggests that extremists are gathering from wealthy countries to the same place Nadia and Saeed made such efforts to escape. This mass movement of migrants across the globe has created conflict and tension among the people because people have different cultural values, belief systems, traditions and values.

As more groups of migrants enter London, sympathy of the native-born turns into disinterest and eventually into hostility between the migrants and the natives. This invites chaos, attacks and mob-rule. The migrants are finally kept into a ghetto with minimal food and electricity called "Dark London". After a raid to clear out a migrant camp goes wrong, the natives decide to try to work together with the new migrants and put them to work. For this, an open space called 'Halo London,' a city surrounding London-proper, is cleared with the promise that the migrants will be given a small plot of land and access to essential facilities. Nadia and Saeed start work as they feel themselves distant from each other.

Nadia is amazed by the new things she sees in London. She is puzzled why the women in England are free to do what they feel. Things that happen around her makes her own identity to question. She wonders traditional culture is good for her or English is the modern culture to follow. Because of the liberal freedom in different norms of English culture, Nadia develops a liking to it. She compares notes that make the cultures different. She admires the British people's idea of self reliance and liberal freedom as they intent to mind their own business rather than commenting on others. Such a freedom is missing in their culture, the women there share their personal and family life to each other; the unity makes them feel close to home. Nadia being dislocated feels that this openness hampers ones' personal space. This is when she really starts to respect privacy and the individual space in life. As a result, she decides to break off with Saeed

and pursue her own career. This is because of the western cultural impact their long relationship ends. Hamid writes:

. . . and so they distanced themselves from each other on social networks, and while they wished to look out for each other, and to keep tabs on each other, staying in touch took a toll on them, serving as an unsettling reminder of a life not lived, and also they grew less worried each for the other, less worried that the other would need them to be happy, and eventually a month went by without any contact, and then a year, and then a lifetime. (222)

But in her efforts to seek freedom in the globalized world, she runs to and fro and thus she becomes a displaced woman as she breaks off with Saeed.

The point of transformation for Nadia happened when she first took the big step out of her home. It looked like she wanted to run away from the reality. She took the longest walk and she kept on walking until she felt lost. She removed one barrier on her own but when she went back to the overloading apartment, she felt trapped again, the furniture in the apartment works symbolic of the nonsense barrier that can be broken by Nadia. The novel gives a lot of metaphorical incident that shows how trapped Nadia feels in the new place, her depressions are shown through real live incident for example. While living in the camp, Saeed meets an acquaintance who claims that he helps people escape the city in times of crisis. But when that man deceives Saeed and Nadia, Saeed has a feeling of nostalgia and remembers his father praying. Hamid writes:

. . . after that Saeed prayed only for Nadia and for his father, especially for his father, who was not with them, and should have been. But there was no way back to his father now, because no door in their city went undiscovered by the militants

for long, and no one returning through a door who was known to have fled their rule was allowed to live. (110)

In the new place, Saeed finds everything lacking and expensive as he observes beautiful town.

The following passage reflects the alien surroundings in which Saeed and Nadia feel rootless.

They find it difficult to have a sense of belongingness and thus dislocated from their homeland.

Hamid writes:

The old town was exquisite, white blocks with blue windows scattered along tawny hills, spilling down to the sea, and from the outskirts Saeed and Nadia could spy little windmills and rounded churches and the vibrant green of trees that from a distance looked like potted plants. It was expensive to stay nearby, the camps there often having migrants with more money, and Saeed was becoming worried. (114)

In the alien land, Saeed and Nadia have to live in dormitories. This makes them feel alienated. As

Hamid writes, "No native lived in the dormitories, for obvious reasons. But they do labour along

with migrants on the work sites, but "usually as supervisors or as operators of heavy machinery"

(176). For Saeed and Nadia, existence in the house in London is much harsh, which makes them

feel rootless. On Mykonos, he had preferred the outskirts of the migrant camps, and he had

grown accustomed to a degree of independence from their fellow refugees. "He was suspicious,

especially of the other men around, of whom there were many, and he found it stressful to be

packed in so tightly with people who spoke in tongues he did not understand. Unlike Nadia, he

felt in part guilty that they and their fellow residents were occupying a home that was not their

own . . ." (129). As Saeed experiences the status of refugees, he feels displaced everywhere he

goes:

From dark London, Saeed and Nadia wondered what life must be like London, where they imagined people dined in elegant restaurants and rode in shiny black cabs, or at least went to work in offices and shops and were free to journey about as they pleased. In dark London, rubbish accrued, uncollected, and underground stations were sealed. The train kept running, skipping stops near Saeed and Nadia but felt as a rumble beneath their feet and heard at a low, power full frequency, almost subsonic, like thunder or the detonation of a massive, distant bomb. (142)

Symbolically, Saeed and Nadia don't move, but "their house began to change nonetheless" (143). This describes the situation of Saeed and Nadia whose heart never moves, but it is the physical houses which keep on changing for them as they wander from one place to another place. This creates internal conflict inside his mind causing alienation.

The effect of ethnoscaapes is clearly observed through Nadia's nightmare where she dreams of her return through the doors back to Mykonos, from which she wakes up with violent physical reactions: ". . . almost panting and felt her body alive, or alarmed" (169). As it can also be argued in the analysis of the characters, Nadia and Saeed's relationship weakens as they travel to the different western countries. At one point, Hamid describes this change through a physical reaction to their more frequent fighting: ". . . not used to arguing, [they] tended to argue, as though their nerves were so raw that extended encounters evoked a sensation of pain" (186). Hamid clearly manages to explain exactly how hurtful they find these fightings, and at this point it seems there is little chance of recovering their relationship.

Later in the novel, a sense of displacement overwhelms the characters. During their time in London, Nadia and Saeed are drifting further apart and losing hold of each other as support and as a connection to their old life in their native city. As Saeed becomes more integrated in a

community of his religion and countrymen, Nadia feels less connected to her cultural roots, and they find themselves struggling to communicate: "[Nadia's] throat felt raw, almost painful, and what else she would have liked to say was unable to find a way through her tongue and her lips But [Saeed] likewise could not bring himself to speak" (180). Their common identity begins to dissolve, thus their common ground. What they find common now is that they are refugees and feeling lost and deprived of their home. So, it becomes impossible for them to relate to each other. In the final part of the book, it seems inevitable that Nadia and Saeed will split up eventually, which they are doomed. However, they continue to stay in contact for most of their life, because of what seems to be a reciprocated act of protection and guilt. Neither of them wishes to inflict any form of fear of abandonment, and they feel they have experienced and worked through too much together: "a world of shared experiences in which no one else would share, and a shared intimate language that was unique to them, and a sense that what they might break was special and likely irreplaceable" (203). Saeed and Nadia come to share their own language. This is the language which describes their feelings, sorrows and happiness. So, their language in the novel symbolizes a will to reinforce their relationship and togetherness in the strange land. In connection to the suffering of displacement Hamid illustrates the loss refugees experience clearly and eloquently. Especially, Saeed feels a loss of home, family and identity.

The only activity that keeps attached to Saeed's roots is the pray he performs under any situation in course of his moving from one place to another. As Hamid mentions, "Now, though, in Marin, Saeed prayed even more, several times a day, and he prayed fundamentally as a gesture of love . . ." (201). As a person losing his roots in the new place, Saeed never forgets to pray and while praying he reflects on his father. However, his praying becomes a kind of hybridized act as he cannot possibly perform his pray in the temple or mosque. He prays as a "lament, as a

consolation, and as a hope" in the space, or in Bhabha's terms "third space" in culturally different surroundings (202). His situation constantly makes him philosophical about life as Saeed reflects:

And this loss unites humanity, unites every human being, the temporary nature of our being-ness, and our shared sorrow, the headache we each carry and yet too often refuse to acknowledge being the temporary in one another, and out of this Saeed felt it might be possible . . . (202)

This shows how immigrants in the different cultural zones are placed into 'in-betweenness' among different cultures in the global world. Their reflection on native culture and norms inspire the life of the characters even after leaving their homeland. They carry the tradition that makes them contented in this fast forward moving time. Hamid further writes:

. . . and prayer for him became about being a man, being one of the men, a ritual that connected him to adulthood and to the notion of being a particular sort of man, a gentleman, a gentle man, a man who stood for community and faith and kindness and decency, a man . . . of this mould. (200)

The people who live in exile is important as this is the only way they stay connected with their homeland and culture. Here, Saeed continues to feel estranged from his own country, a feeling that he tries to lessen by praying every day. As Appadurai claims the content of the previously discussed different flows "constantly mutates; their relation to one another is increasingly distant and antagonistic. As they pass through national boundaries, in each country they intensify the division between the nation -- the country's cultural identity and unity" (216). This shows how the characters in *Exit West* feel divided citizens as they travel to different countries.

Things that happen around them make their own identity but they feel traditional culture is good for them or foreign is the modern culture to follow. Nadia becomes the liberal freedom in different norms of foreign culture as she starts to like it. She compares things that make the cultures different. She admires the British people's idea of self reliance and liberal freedom as they intend to mind their own business rather than commenting on others. Such a freedom is missing in their native culture, the women in the Muslim society have to live wearing Burka.

Although Hamid has not clearly explained what religion Saeed follows, it can well be gathered that he is a Muslim. In a different culture, Saeed finds dislocated, so in order to avoid being a hybrid individual, he tries to follow his own native religion and culture because Saeed finds himself in liminal space.

As Bhabha maintains that the hybrid, "though unrepresentable in itself . . . ensures that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity" (37). Although the hybrid's existence is predicated upon the existence of pure cultural categories, it simultaneously and implicitly rejects the notion of a 'pure' identity. As cultural theorist Floya Anthias maintains, it is this paradoxical notion of Bhabha's hybrid that allows culture to transgress and inhabit "a liminal space" (623). This shows that Saeed's adhering to his own culture in foreign country is not original; it is a kind of hybridized cultural identity as it is not possible to retain pure Muslim identity in the different cultural setting. Hamid illustrates the loss refugees experience clearly and eloquently. Especially Saeed feels a loss of everything:

When the warmth between [Nadia and Saeed] seemed lacking his sorrow was immense, so immense that he was uncertain whether all his losses had not combined into a core of loss, and in this core, the centre, the death of his mother and the death of his father and the possible death of his ideal self . . . (188)

Saeed does not only feel displaced in terms of physical location, loss of objects, and family, he experiences a loss of identity which the theoretical insight of Bhabha. As a recurring theme in the novel, as mentioned earlier, Hamid includes authorial comments offering his perspective on refuge and the necessary abandonment of one's home, family, and friends in order to survive: "when we migrate, we murder from our lives those we leave behind" (94). By this, he suggests that for a successful post-displacement integration in the host country's culture and custom, the refugee or migrant must consciously break with one's old life and accept the loss that follows.

Finally, Saeed and Nadia reach America. Although the couple is on a list that puts them among the first to get a home, Nadia suggests that they move to Marin, outside San Francisco. They find they are generally welcome there and Nadia gets a job at a food co-op while Saeed gets involved with a local religious organization led by an Afro-American preacher. Eventually, realizing that they no longer have any feelings for one another, Nadia leaves Saeed and moves into a room at the co-op, forming a relationship with a cook who works there. Saeed, meanwhile, gets more involved with the preacher's daughter and finally gets to marry her. And thus he becomes a hybridized person. In this way, the couple's journey from rootedness to rootlessness is significant.

For Saeed and Nadia, migration is a concrete experience which breaks down every opposition among different geographical locations in course of their movement. These characters, who are located simultaneously inside and outside a culture, have been embodying a wider, contemporary postmodern condition in which they become hybridized in the deterritorialized global world. So, as they escape from their homeland, they end up being rootless while on the move.

III. Conclusion: Quest for Roots in *Exit West*

This research work on *Exit West* argues how different global flows in modern world displace immigrants who travel to different countries for different purposes. Specifically, the study argues how Arjun Appadurai's description of one of the flows "ethnoscapes" is relevant and significant in analyzing the situation of the characters Saeed and Nadia, who escape from their native land and try to settle down in different western countries. However, in this process, they find themselves in constant identity crisis and insecurity as they are placed in-betweenness of different cultures as described by Bhabha.

As dislocated people and their experiences of 'ethnoscapes' the characters grab the doors that take refugees to different places. In this process, they are thrown into in-betweenness of different cultures in different countries. The research hints at an age in which all the humankind would be refugees as the novel provides with glimpses of a migration catastrophe where everybody seems to be on the move. While dealing with the subject of inevitable mass migration of people, the physical and mental agony faced by refugees has also been beautifully portrayed. *Exit West* has changed our perception about the concepts of nationhood and borders. The novel posits a quite

different approach towards the issue of mass migration of people by presenting a totally different view of world geography and the artificial borders.

So, this entire situation can well be attributed to the argument of ArjunAppadurai who has argued that the global flows create disjuncture in global cultural relationships. The novel portrays how migration causes emotional violence of the migrants who find themselves cut off from the people they have been close to but who now would occupy a different geographic reality. And needless to say, this situation has brought about the condition of dislocation and in-betweenness among migrant population making it rootless. The study shows a tragic reality both of the plight of the refugee and of the breakdown of family and home. In this way, as the novel has raised a timely issue of immigration through the novel, this research has explored the sufferings of the immigrants. So, in this backdrop, Saeed and Nadia's entire struggle associated with their movements from one place to another reflects their search for their roots as they find themselves uprooted in the course of their movement.

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