



Vol. 3 No. 2 (February) (2025)

## **Traversing Borders: The Role of Vignettes in Depicting Globalisation in Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West***

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### **Abstract**

This study explores the significance of various vignettes in Mohsin Hamid's novel *Exit West* to elucidate Globalization's social and cultural dimensions. Through these vignettes, Hamid portrays the agonizing experiences of migrants who strive to adjust their cultural and social norms to survive in Western societies, often feeling separated and estranged. The research aims to establish connections between the vignettes and the broader context of Globalization, focusing on the characters' desires for escape, their struggles with assimilation, and the creation of hybrid cultures. The study uses Stuart Hall's Representation and Coding/Decoding theories to analyze how Hamid's narrative techniques reflect the complex realities of migration, displacement, and cultural conflict in the contemporary global landscape. The findings highlight how Globalization influences individual identities and relationships, emphasizing the perpetual state of flux and transformation within societies. This research contributes to the understanding of Globalization's impact on literature and the lived experiences of migrants, offering insights into the broader implications of cultural integration and resistance.

**Key Words:** Stuart Hall, Globalization, identity, coding/decoding, Representation, narrative technique

### **Introduction**

*Exit West* (2017) records the agonizing experiences of the outsiders attempting to adjust their cultural and social standards to survive on Western borders, but they are separated and estranged. The novel opens in a period of distress and friction discernible from the first sentence. Hamid's opening statement of the book that the city is still "mostly settled at peace" (p. 3) underscores the idea that the society is not entirely settled at last, restricting unity and accord/harmony as fragile. Moreover, by highlighting Nadia's choice to remain dressed in long, strict



## Vol. 3 No. 2 (February) (2025)

robes, Hamid allows the readers to ponder the effect of religion on the habits by which people see one another.

Nadia desires to travel to Chile, thinking there will be no light pollution, so she can feel relaxed and look in the clear sky at the "Milky Way" (p.21). Saeed's desire to visit Cuba to see the sea and the beautiful old buildings (p.20) shows that they want to step away from their daily lives. Like anybody, they need to grow their viewpoints by visiting remote territories and investigating new things. While this is a very normal craving, it is enhanced by their own city slipping into chaos. In that way, desiring to travel becomes similar to a temporary escape.

Despite the challenges both (Saeed and Nadia) face, Nadia grasps the difficulties more promptly than Saeed. She does not experience issues in tolerating and assimilating with various societies, which directly results from her drive. They can discover the entryway to London and, after that, to Marin. On the other hand, Saeed thinks it is hard to modify and always search for an association with home. These distinctions gradually rise above the silences between them, copying the progressions in cultures and identities due to displacement and relocation. Hamid mingles the story of their migration with short stories of comparable changes happening everywhere throughout the globe where individuals meet up from the whole way across the world and make new hybrid societies, a dull shadow that comes out from of a cabinet in Australia, a family which appears in a luxury building and an old 'wrinkled' man who rises out of a shed and takes a local for an invigorating trip. Each of these accounts portrays a world in transition, advancing and bringing forth new and different perspectives.

Hamid utilizes the tale of their expedition to make a microcosm of the globe, which consistently shows signs of change and transformation because of the invasion of psychological oppression, war, and removal. In the long run, the reconstruction of their characters because of contact with assorted variety affects their relationship, too; Saeed proceeds onward with a minister's little girl, and Nadia finds a partner in a blue-eyed woman. These differences, as a part of their characters, continue extending, gradually pulling them apart even as they attempt to persevere. In an unsuccessful endeavour to revive the flash between them, they utilize another entryway and move to Maine. *Exit West's* end clearly shows how the main characters' lives get affected; even after separation, they are not contented.

The migrants, however, experience resistance at social, cultural just and political levels to be acknowledged regarding this considerable migration. They are compelled to continue an unacceptable life by doing unsatisfactory employment. Nonetheless, they cannot overcome any issues of inconspicuous limits that break down 'them' from 'us,' untouchable from insiders and unquestionably 'blacks' from 'whites.' This study critically focuses on Saeed and Nadia's current fears and issues for their future. The novel sheds light on the civil unrest. This study uses Hall's theory of Globalization and cultural conflicts, which migrants experience globally.

### **Significance of Vignettes in Literary Writings (A review of literature)**

Vignettes allow for managing thorny issues and concentrating on touchy subjects. For genuineness, vignettes may be established on certifiable conditions. Vignettes are often used to get data on get-together feelings and characteristics and conduct benchmarks. However, such research will undoubtedly focus on



## Vol. 3 No. 2 (February) (2025)

social perceptions, unmistakable evidence, and increasingly significant cognizance of the issues under assessment.

The writers, paying little heed to whether they need most to be wealthy or shrewd, have unequivocal purposes they might want to achieve with any piece of work. If they are skilled researchers in charge of what they create, they plan all aspects of what they are writing to achieve their inspiration. They go to the degree that people understand what they are doing and plan their writings to gain inspiration. Someone who picks the inspiration driving being rich will structure and do many legal or illegal exercises to get the perfect wealth. A person needing to increment unprecedented adroitness (knowledge) will design a remarkable life course.

The purpose of these vignettes is two-fold. The dynamic reader scrutinizes more than the words and musings: he examines what the writer is doing. He reproduces the general arrangement, the creator's inspiration and the strategies used to comprehend that reason. An authentic model is an assessment driven by Gerber (1994), who has used ethnographic gatherings to investigate people's perspectives on their home, the language used to depict it, and the factors considered in their decision to react to an expert's request. From the outset, Gerber coordinates non-composed gatherings with 25 respondents, some of whom experienced inconvenient living conditions. People from medium-term homes and penniless safe houses are picked as respondents.

An example to represent the division between "living" and "temporary staying": A question is asked of two respondents who experience discomforted living. When the question related to lousy living is asked: "So you are not living here?" (p.309), the respondent answers back he [lost] his townhouse (condo) in December; this is the justification he gave for his 'staying' in that house with her partner instead of 'living.' He stresses that regardless of living there, washing there, and resting there, he is limited in most things. Therefore, he struggles to find an 'exit' from this house.

The vignettes delineate sketchy life conditions and are used to perceive illustrative plans and respondents' explanations for their homes. According to Gerber, when making judgments about marvellous (complex) or ambiguous cases, the respondents reveal the segments that [are] basic to them and the method of reasoning they [follow] in their essential initiative. During the gathering, Gerber intended to change the conditions to seek out the whole chain of rational models. For example, she shifted such parameters to shorter or longer terms of staying and separated the changes in the response to the vignette.

The vignette technique has emerged as a significant methodological tool across various fields, offering insights into values, emotions, and cultural meanings. Janet et al. (2021), in their paper "Vignette: At the Margins," explore the use of vignettes to examine interpersonal and interspecies relationships. The study presents short, descriptive scenarios and demonstrates how vignettes facilitate a deeper understanding of individuals' perceptions, values, and emotions within specific cultural contexts. This method is particularly effective in uncovering the complexities of human-animal and human-human interactions, offering a valuable framework for researchers exploring cultural meanings.

Similarly, Amy et al. (2021) employ vignettes as a narrative strategy to amplify the voices of Aboriginal core searchers. By centralizing Indigenous perspectives, the study highlights the potential of vignettes to share personal stories in



## Vol. 3 No. 2 (February) (2025)

culturally relevant ways, empowering marginalized voices and fostering social change. However, the authors acknowledge certain limitations, such as the need for greater involvement of community members in the authoring process to ensure authenticity and inclusivity.

Manisha (2024) offers another critical perspective by analyzing Harka Gurung's *Vignettes of Nepal*. Manisha explores the representation of cultural borderlands through a historical, cultural, and ethno-geographical methodology. The study emphasizes the role of vignettes in fostering socio-cultural harmony and connecting literature to historical and geographical narratives, particularly in border literature.

Anna et al. (2022) provide an etymological and historical examination of the vignette in anthropology. They argue that while vignettes have often been dismissed as decorative or effeminate textual embellishments, they hold significant ethnographic value. The paper traces the development of vignettes within anthropology, emphasizing the need for systematic methodological attention to this often-overlooked tool.

Demetriou (2023) extends this discussion by underscoring the methodological significance of vignettes in anthropology. He calls for a renewed focus on vignettes as a central tool for ethnographic research, encouraging anthropologists to integrate them more deliberately into their methodologies to capture socio-cultural complexities better.

### **Research Gap and Contribution of the Study**

Despite the diverse applications of the vignette technique across disciplines, it remains critical to explore its role in analyzing broader socio-cultural dimensions of Globalization within contemporary fiction. Existing studies primarily focus on the methodological and representational potential of vignettes. Still, they fail to examine how vignettes, particularly within novels, illuminate global phenomena such as cultural hybridization, alienation, and identity formation.

This study addresses this gap by critically analyzing how *Exit West* uses vignettes and the personal trajectories of its protagonists to connect individual experiences with the broader dynamics of Globalization. Drawing on Stuart Hall's theory of Globalization and Cultural Conflicts, this research investigates the challenges migrants face in adapting to a globalized world while contending with issues of belonging and identity. By focusing on the socio-cultural implications of vignettes in *Exit West*, this study contributes to both literary and cultural studies, offering a deeper understanding of Globalization's transformative impact on human relationships and identities.

### **Methodology**

#### **Hall's Theory of Coding/Decoding/Representation through Language**

Similarly, Hall's view on representation and its importance to social development through language and meaning is significant how language is made to imply that it permits individuals to convey effectively, how meaning is utilized to speak to ideas and thoughts, delivering importance through language and portrayal, enabling us to depict something or envision it, to symbolize ideas through objects, and how the information and force can control the representation. One may feel that representation is a basic, straightforward procedure. However, it is



## Vol. 3 No. 2 (February) (2025)

considerably more vital than it shows up; representation is a key factor in creating meaning and sharing between individuals from a culture.

It includes utilizing language, signs, and images and aiming to speak to things. The researcher expresses all the discussions impartially. Hall separates representation into three speculations: 1. Reflective: where the language mirrors importance, which currently exists in the realm of items, individuals, and occasions. 2. Intentional: where language communicates the speaker's very own planned significance. 3. Constructionist: where meaning is built in through language.

Hall thinks the constructionist approach has recently had the most critical effect on social examinations. He separates it into two significant models: the semiotic methodology and the discursive methodology. Representation is a fundamental requirement for correspondence; without representation, we would not have the option to speak with each other, as representation is mostly about importance, which, at that point, prompts understanding. So, how is meaning generated? Meaning is created when somebody relates a specific word to an object; the object may have existed previously; however, it does not have significance until somebody tags along and gives it a name. According to Hall, Representation is created by two frameworks that complete each other to shape meaning; the mental representation incorporates all objects, individuals, ideas, and language, which permits us to depict these items, individuals, and ideas, implying that it can be conveyed through signs like words, sounds, pictures, and items. One may infer 'representation' to mean displaying something which is, as of now ", represent," so what is the genuine importance of an item rather than how the media speak to it? Thus, social media moves the genuine significance of what is now there, so the fact of the matter is unavoidably distorted.

Hall (1980) first discusses representation and how it includes language of significance in its procedure, how we speak and represent through meaning, and how language inspires meaning. At this stage, language bridges the gap between meaning and representation, and it is anything but a scaffold on the off chance that we will discuss how materialistic language is. However, it is an extension of how it interfaces two poles to one another. Language originates from an idea and clarifies it.

Following the same lines as Hall, Hamid shows a fantastic language technique for capturing various voices and how individuals talk, behave, and think in their most private lives. The novel has the vitality to state everything simultaneously and in as much detail as he can manage. Hamid is a writer who keeps an eye on things worldwide and conveys them through his writings. Considering Hall's theory of representation, which he breaks down into three parts: Reflective, Intentional, and Constructionist, different vignettes will be interpreted to decode the speaker's personal intended meaning.

### **Problem Statement**

Globalization has transformed social and cultural dynamics, creating both opportunities for cross-cultural interaction and challenges like identity crises and cultural alienation, especially for migrants. Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* (2017) explores these themes through Saeed and Nadia's journey of displacement and adaptation. While Saeed clings to his roots, Nadia embraces change, highlighting the struggles of cultural assimilation and hybridization.



## Vol. 3 No. 2 (February) (2025)

Despite the novel's compelling narrative, there is a need for a critical exploration of how the vignettes and personal trajectories of the protagonists collectively illuminate the broader socio-cultural dimensions of Globalization. This study addresses the gap by analyzing how *Exit West* connects the experiences of its characters to the broader global phenomena of cultural hybridization, alienation, and social transformation. Using Hall's theory of Globalization and Cultural Conflicts, the research investigates the nuanced challenges migrants face in adapting to the globalized world while contending with issues of belonging and identity.

### **Research Question**

What is the significance of different vignettes in terms of Globalization in the novel?

### **Research Objective**

To establish the connection of different vignettes in contexts of social and cultural dimensions of Globalisation.

### **Significant Vignettes in *Exit West* (2017)**

This section analyses selective vignettes from the novel, producing a 'snapshot' of the present social and cultural situation worldwide. It offers a space to provide a discursive interpretation within the context of a vignette. Hamid mentions a few vignettes in the novel to convey his discontent with the issues the locals face globally. Today, when the powers of Globalization at one level and those of ethnic clash, secessionism, and typical savagery at another level add to insecurity in numerous pieces of the world. In the light of Hall's Coding/Decoding and Representation hypothesis (1980), the researcher has deciphered these vignettes to show how meaning is created from the content. The content of the vignettes is deciphered to show the social and social association in terms of Globalization.

### **Vignette of Dark Man/Australian Woman**

Hall (1997) believes that the colonized 'Other' is established inside the portrayal systems of such a metropolitan place. They are set in their otherness by the idea of the 'English eye,' the widely inclusive 'English eye.' The 'English eye' sees everything else except is not exactly great at perceiving that it is itself taking a look at something. It gets coterminous with sight itself. It is an organized portrayal, all things considered, and a social portrayal that is constantly double. In other words, it is emphatically focused; knowing where it is and what it will be, it places everything else. Furthermore, the magnificent thing about English personality is that it did not just put the colonized other; it placed every other person.

Hamid (2017) presents this idea of othering in chapter 1 of the novel, taking the help of a vignette. The sleepy Australian woman represents the Westerners who are enjoying the richness of wealth and freedom and are least bothered about the problems of their 'Others.' The description of things on her side table (p. 6), i.e., "passports, cheques, and the keys," means that she is wealthy and seems to be enjoying her life. It represents how the people are busy in their lives and almost ignorant about whatever is happening on the other side of the world. She is 'sleeping,' and a "strange man appears from the darkness." The Westerners are



## Vol. 3 No. 2 (February) (2025)

significantly ignorant of what is happening in third-world countries and the daily events happening in their own country, which Hamid describes as 'room' in the novel.

The message behind the 'dark man appearing from darkness' can be discussed in Hall's view of colonizing others. The dark colour of the man suggests that he is either Brown or Black. The word "dark" is repeated again and again to foreground the idea that the man emerges from a rectangle of complete darkness (reference to a room), which gleamed in the shine of her PC charger and wireless router (reference to technology or Globalization). It means that the room of the Australian woman is enlightened with knowledge, and she is modern, whereas the man has been associated with the "heart of darkness" (p. 6). It becomes very symbolic if we compare this phrase with the novel *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad. In his novel, Conrad refers to "The Congo" as a dark, uncultured, and barbaric place; similarly, the man in this vignette can be from the Middle East, South Asia, or Africa. We know what is currently happening in the Middle East and African countries and the terrorism that occurs in Asian countries like Pakistan and India.

The darkness from which the man emerges suggests that the man's country is war-torn, full of bloodshed, violence, killings, bomb blasts, and, in short, darkness symbolizes uncultured people. Hamid depicts Australia or any Western country as a hope for a 'brighter' future. 'Bright,' which is in contrast to the 'darkness.' We all know that black, brown, or people of other ethnicities are racially and religiously discriminated against by the natives of the West. It explains that the 'dark man' is scared of making a noise. He wants not to be spotted. Because he knows he does not belong there. This description proposes that his presence in the room is just a transitory moment, a stop while in transit to another spot. The moment accordingly symbolizes the 'stereotype' imaging of the 'migrant.' He is what Stuart Hall calls 'the other'.

One crucial point to be noted here: A strange man appears from darkness (p .6), walks around the room (p .7), and jumps through the window (p. 8). This peculiar 'dark man' walks inside the room, and he knows it is illegal to be there. It depicts the situation of migrants and refugees in the West. They are banned from entering Western countries, which this novel depicts as a 'closed door'. A door is a legal and usual way of entering and leaving a house, room, or country. That door can be taken as a border, too. Since the borders are closed, we see that the dark man chooses 'the window' for his escape to enter the city. Now we know no one enters any place through a window. The window can be taken as an illegal way of entering Western countries. The dark man chooses the window instead of the door. He has to go underground and not go into the hands of the government. It can be assumed that he has a fear of getting deported to his 'dark country.'

Another important fact is when a strange man enters the room, stands and walks there for a while, and finally leaves. He does not steal any money (cheques lying on the side table of the pale woman) and does not harm her physically (the woman is alone, her husband is in Perth on business, and the man can easily harm her if he wants to) but the dark man does not do so. He leaves, and the woman is still asleep, unaware of what just happened so close to her. The thing to note here is that most of the time, these natives walk past them daily. It is just irrational behaviour. Hamid presents the idea that if the world becomes borderless and the governments do not constrain people, the world can connect



on a deeper level.

### **Vignette of Filipino Girls/Man with Tattoos**

Most of the time, Hall speaks more about the local politics. Hall does not discuss different endeavours to develop an alternate political issue worldwide essentially because he has been attempting to follow through the subject of ethnicity, the question of place, and the topic of putting, which is the thing that the term ethnicity implies for him corresponding to issues of the nearby and the worldwide. Furthermore, in numerous regards, he does not believe that those endeavours to put together a different worldwide politics are fruitful.

In any case, for Hall, the second piece of the inquiry is the most significant one. In the book, "Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities," he states that for what reason does he possibly discuss what a neighbourhood is when the inquiries he makes, by all accounts, tend to be widespread worldwide marvels? He does not make that differentiation between the neighbourhood and the worldwide. He thinks there is a constant understanding of the two. The question is, what are the areas in which battles may be created? He cannot help feeling that a counter-legislative issue which is pitched correctly and transcendently at the degree of standing up to the worldwide powers that are attempting to redo and recover the world right now, and which are led essentially at that level, are not making especially progress (p.61).

In Chapter 2 of the novel (in Shinjuku), a man is sitting in a bar having whiskey. The description of the man suggests that he might have been in a gang or still in a gang. "The hidden tattoos; sober eyes, the metal" (p.15), which can be taken for something sharp, a knife. But that can be questioned whether it is or not. However, one thing Hamid tries to show is that man has a violent nature. He can do "bad stuff" without thinking. It makes the man dangerous; if we go deeply, he is a "dangerous native." It means that he will oppose the invasion of migrants and refugees in his homeland (the situation suggests such). It's not like an actual invasion, but residing in his homeland is a kind of invasion for him. Otherwise, why would he oppose if something is not at stake? We see that the man is coming out of the bar, and he finds two Filipino girls coming out from a Dark Portal (p.27). At this point, Hamid highlights the sort of treatment people frequently receive when they move to new places. Violent suspicion is what foresees the people who get away from their own countries. The man observes those two Filipino girls, and it reminds him of a boy in his high school whom he [has] beaten very severely. He [is] not expelled from the school because no one [says] that he [is] the one to win that Filipino boy.

We see the man following those two girls, and right after that, we learn that he has a 'metal' in his pocket, possibly a knife or a phone (p. 28). But did he hurt the girls or not? He may have killed those girls. Hamid leaves it open-ended. From this vignette, once again, Hamid has covertly tried to highlight the idea of 'Racism' in the age of Globalisation. Hamid writes in the novel the tattooed man dislikes Filipinos. "They [have] their place, but they [have] to know their place" (p. 28).

In Japan, the total population of Japanese is 97.8 %. The remaining is of the outsiders residing in Japan. The number of foreigners has recently increased due to insufficient labour workers. It is a fact that the Japanese are considered to be one of the proudest nations in the world. The Japanese consider themselves a





## Vol. 3 No. 2 (February) (2025)

'superior race' to other races, especially in Asia. They consider themselves rightful rulers of Asia and are destined to rule it eternally. There is a lot of evidence to support the nationalism in Japan. One of the most horrific incidents of xenophobia was the great Kanto earthquake in Japan in 1923, where thousands of Koreans were wrongfully accused of poisoning the water supply. It resulted in the deaths of 3,000 Koreans, along with 26,000 imprisoned.

No one can deny the racism in Japan as a part of their society. One can find countless examples of non-Japanese being discriminated against at airports, schools, etc. Hamid writes in the novel that there [have] been a half-Filipino kid in his middle school class whom he [has] beaten frequently, once so gravely that he would have been removed. "[Has] somebody been eager to state who had done it" (p.28). This incident of the Tokyo man reflects the reality of racism in Japan. Now, racism is not rare in the world. It is happening everywhere, in both the East and West. However, in Japan, specifically considering the population of natives, it can be harsh for non-Japanese people to adjust. In this novel, the Tokyo man clearly 'dislikes' Filipinos (p. 28). Because he has shown violence against non-Japanese early in his life, there is a chance that when he walk behind those girls, he might have killed or at least harassed them as "they [are] entering his territory".(p.28) Therefore, he can hurt, kill, or forgive at his will. This open-mindedness leaves the reader with an inquisitive thought about what can happen next. In short, this tattooed man represents the West, which has the hidden power to decide the future of those they consider 'Others.'

### **Vignette of Naval Officer and Old Man**

Hamid writes that an older person remains with a naval official on the border of his property, gazing at his home in La Jolla, California, surrounded by different soldiers. The older person himself used to be in the Navy. However, the official remaining beside him gives little heed to him, getting over his inquiries when he asks whether the ones' getting through' are Mexicans or Muslims. The officer disclosed that he could not answer such questions, and the older person asked how to help. "I will tell you," the official says, offering to take the elderly person to remain with family members or companions. As he goes to respond to the inquiry, the old person realizes he 'has no place to go' (p.46). This vignette in *Exit West* shows the social numbness of people who pretend to safeguard their borders and keep people out. The point when the old person inquires as to whether the individuals "coming through" are "Mexicans or Muslims," he uncovers a cultural insensitivity, one that prefers to keep people out and to realize who they are in any case. Such behaviour, Hamid suggests, embarrasses an individual in everyday life and leaves him alone, for the old person has no one to go to since his home has been taken over by both the Navy and whomever it is that is 'coming' to America 'through his home.' It is crucial in one way that not only the ones who are the migrants or people experiencing homelessness seeking shelter in other countries but also the ones who are the locals of imperial countries get affected in any way. Their problems are not highlighted to give an impression to others that things are fine on their side; in fact, they are also going through difficulties. It is called the discontent of Globalisation, where no one is completely happy or secure.



Vol. 3 No. 2 (February) (2025)

## **Vignette of Black Magic Doors and Its Social and Cultural Significance**

We see the magic doors throughout the novel, which is the central vignette. There are three possible interpretations of this vignette in social and cultural contexts.

- (a) Cell Phones/ Technology
- (b) Smuggling.
- (c) Borders

### **(a) Cell Phones/ Technology**

This interpretation is applied for many reasons. One thing that aligns both the Magic Doors and Cell phones is that they can take you to another place; they can reconnect you with someone far away from you in a moment. Hamid warns about the dangers of technology in the novel, saying that it can sometimes connect people with others who may harm them.

The researcher thinks the door, like a cell phone, can take anyone into a new world. The Internet is a global phenomenon, and the world is now connected more than before. We can easily connect to a whole new world, and at the same time, we can disconnect with people around us.

The "Magic Door" can transport you to a better place. The life we portray on social media is also better than reality because it is an illusion. In illusions, there is pure creativity in our creation. We can build and change whatever we want. The social media life is a whole new world by itself. It has a lesser connection to reality. The Magic doors can also transport you to another country where everything is different from before. In the novel, we see Nadia spending more time on the Internet than Saeed. Nadia spends hours surfing on the Internet, while Saeed resists the Internet's pull.

Saeed's father does not go through the magic door with Saeed and Nadia. He does not use the cell phone in the novel, indicating the generation gap between the two generations. Saeed's father stays in the about-to-be-blown city because his wife is buried there. He cannot manage to live somewhere other than his city. He thinks he will be a burden on his son and Nadia.

At another point, rumours circulate all over the city about 'Doors' that can take individuals somewhere. Some say a 'normal door' can become a 'special door' without warning (p.69). It is again symbolic that there are doors that twist the laws of material science, and in doing so, present borders and divisions are ultimately futile. This phenomenon is particularly critical for people like Saeed and Nadia, who might profit significantly from deserting their nation and moving elsewhere. Out of nowhere, the whole thought of geographical boundary makes no difference, for the world has opened itself up, associating impossible spots with each other and offering entry to anyone who discovers one of these odd gateways.

### **(b) Smuggling**

Socially, the Magic doors can also be interpreted as the unchecked migration and smuggling which goes unnoticed. It just reflects the actual situation of migration in today's world. Travel agents transport Nadia and Saeed illegally through the Magic Door to Mykonos and London. They do not have visas and passports. They enter Mykonos, London, Marin, California, and San Francisco unchecked. They



## Vol. 3 No. 2 (February) (2025)

do not enter these countries and cities legally. Hamid writes that the passage of these borders was like 'dying' and 'getting born' again. (p. 98)

We see throughout the novel that people appear from those magical doors and roam freely in the new countries. Saeed and Nadia's first exit is from the same black door. "The agent gestures with his head to the blackness of the door...and asks Saeed to go first" (p.97). It shows that these agents cum facilitators help people using unknown means to move into a new place. Currently, we see many South Asians fleeing to Western countries in search of a better lifestyle. At the same time, it is a fact they adopt illegal ways and are also welcomed by the natives, just like the Black Man and Pale Woman vignette. The dark man jumps through the window and 'enters the city'. This window is an indication of illegal migration. The door of the bedroom is the legal way of entering a city.

In the novel, we see men with rifles arriving in the city with Nadia and Saeed. It indicates that unchecked movements may bring connections among people from different countries and cultures (the Brazilian woman and man from Amsterdam who become friends), but at the same time, there is a risk for the natives and the country.

Hamid tries to bring forward the idea that migration must be checked. But that does not mean to stop people who flee their country for the survival of their lives. It means that the government should support them openly. It is a global phenomenon.

### **(c) Doors and Windows as Borders**

Hall's concept of coding/decoding can be inferred from the new concept Hamid portrays in the novel, in which the meaning of windows and doors is entirely changed. Typically, the door is perceived as a point of 'exit', not the window. Notwithstanding, Hamid writes at one point that a "window is like the border, through which death [is] possibly most likely to come" (p.68). The researcher has discussed the idea several times, where the door and window are shown as a border. It is shown in the novel through the vignette of the Dark man who enters the room of an 'Australian woman' from the dark out of nowhere, but he takes an 'exit' from the 'window'.

### **Vignette of British Account Escaping his Life**

The British accountant approaches his bathtub, desiring to continue cutting his wrists. This vignette is the first in the novel that features an individual's choice to stroll through a door. From the other vignettes, it is important as it features what occurs on the opposite side of this choice. This one, however, centres on the British accountant's craving to escape his life. After much contemplation, he initially decides to murder himself, a definite escape. The door at this stage gives him another option: he can quit everything without taking his life.

Pondering his mom's disease, his dad's withdrawn character and his youth, the accountant chooses to experience the door only once to perceive what is on the opposite side. After some time in the novel, his daughter and his closest companion get writings from him and pictures of him on a seashore someplace in Namibia. His going away message illuminates them that he will not be returning. "With that, he [is] gone", composes Hamid, "and his London [is] gone," (p.128 ), and it is exceptionally hard for anybody to tell concerning to what extent he will stay in Namibia.



## Vol. 3 No. 2 (February) (2025)

When the accountant goes through the door, he effectively gets away from the things throughout his life that are troubling him. This utilization of migration is prominently unique in relation to how Nadia and Saeed utilize the doors. Though this man effectively looks for change, Saeed and Nadia are inclined toward new skylines since the condition has made it essential for them to do as such. Such may be why the accountant's experience is promptly effective, giving him a feeling of bliss instead of dread and vulnerability. Obviously, it is also significant how simple it is for this man to enter another nation. Undoubtedly, he does not need to confront angry guards or cops shouting at him to leave. This benefit proposes that the world is shockingly one-sided toward white working-class men, permitting them to do anything they desire, even as dark-coloured migrants like Saeed and Nadia battle to do something very similar.

### Conclusion

Through the vignettes presented in *Exit West*, Mohsin Hamid highlights the profound and pervasive themes of migration, racism, othering, and discontent with Globalization. By employing symbolic representations—such as the "dark man" entering the Australian woman's room, the tattooed man encountering Filipino girls, and the naval officer overlooking the old man's home—Hamid critiques the societal divide between the privileged and the marginalized. These vignettes expose how Globalization, while promising interconnectedness, often reinforces existing inequalities, with the 'Other' being defined, excluded, and forced into unconventional paths of survival.

The recurring motif of the *magic doors* underscores the tension between mobility and restriction. These doors metaphorically represent technology, unchecked migration, and borders—highlighting the global movement's possibilities and consequences. While some, like the British accountant, effortlessly escape their lives through these doors, migrants such as Saeed and Nadia experience displacement, fear, and rejection as they navigate hostile territories.

Hamid's narrative reveals the double-edged nature of Globalization: it fosters connection but also deepens cultural divisions and racial prejudices. By leaving many vignettes open-ended, Hamid challenges readers to reflect on their biases, the reality of migration, and the necessity of fostering compassion in an increasingly interconnected yet fractured world. Ultimately, *Exit West* serves as a poignant commentary on human migration and the urgent need to reimagine borders, not as barriers but as pathways toward collective understanding and coexistence.

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## Vol. 3 No. 2 (February) (2025)

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