

A SURREALIST READING OF MOHSIN HAMID'S *EXIT WEST*

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Abstract

The study aims at exploring the surrealist elements in Mohsin Hamid's novel Exit West. It analyzes the motifs and a technique employed by Hamid, and discusses how they contribute to the overall themes of displacement, migration, and identity in the novel. The study also examines how Hamid uses surrealist imagery, dream-like sequences, and unconventional perspectives to depict the characters' experiences of dislocation and otherness. The knowledge of the elements of surrealism will add depth and nuance to the novel's exploration of complex and timely issues. Using a close reading approach to the selected passages, the paper evaluates the ways in which the author employs surrealist techniques to challenge conventional notions of time, space, and reality, and to convey the experiences of displacement, migration, and the erosion of identity. Through the knowledge of surrealism in the context of the novel, the readers can gain a greater understanding of the power of the imagination to shape their understanding of the world and human experience.

Key Words: *Surrealism, migration, Identity, Displacement, Magical realism, dream-like sequences, narrative structure, disorientation, Power of dream, and identity.*

Introduction

Surrealism as a literary and artistic movement emerged in the early 20th century, characterized by a focus on the unconscious mind and the irrational elements of human experience (Brotchie & Gooding, 1991). It has a profound impact on literature, art, and culture, influencing the works of many renowned artists and writers. In contemporary literature, the use of surrealism has continued to be prevalent, providing writers with a creative outlet to explore complex themes and ideas. One such work that employs surrealism is Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*, a novel that weaves together the complexities of migration, identity, and love. Set in an unnamed country on the brink of civil war, the novel follows the journey of two young lovers, Nadia and Saeed, as they navigate the tumultuous political landscape and the uncertainties of the future. Throughout the novel, Hamid employs surrealist techniques, such as magical realism, dream-like sequences, and the blurring of reality and fiction, to highlight the emotional turmoil and existential angst experienced by the characters.

The study will explore the use of surrealism in *Exit West* and its significance in the portrayal of migration, identity, and love. Through an analysis of the novel's stylistic elements and its underlying themes, it will be examined how surrealism is utilized to depict the characters' experiences of displacement, the fragmentation of identity, and the search for belonging.

Undoubtedly, Hamid also employs dream-like sequences and the blurring of reality and fiction in *Exit West*. As noted by White (2003), such techniques are often used by writers to "represent the complexity and fragmentation of human experience" (p. 27). The knowledge of surrealism in *Exit West* provides a unique perspective on the challenges faced by migrants and the complexities of human experience. Through an analysis of the novel's stylistic elements and underlying themes, it will be shown how magical realism, dream-like sequences, and the blurring of reality and fiction serve to convey the characters' emotional turmoil, challenge traditional notions of identity, and underscore the importance of human connection and empathy in times of crisis.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the abundant literary criticism on Mohsin Hamid's novel "*Exit West*," the surrealistic elements in the book have received little attention. However, the critical reception of "*Exit West*" has mostly focused on the book's political and social themes, neglecting its surrealist aesthetics. This research paper aims to explore the role of surrealism in "*Exit West*" and how it shapes the narrative, the characters, and the themes of the book.

Research Objectives

The research objectives of the study will include:-

- To identify and analyze the surrealistic elements in the novel "*Exit West*."
- To explore the relationship between surrealism and the political and social themes in the novel, such as dislocation, pure psyche automation, identity, and disorientation.

Research Question

Which elements and techniques of surrealism are employed by Hamid in his novel *Exit West*?

Significance of the Study

- The study will point out surrealistic techniques in detail used in *Exit West* and how these techniques contribute to the overall artistic and aesthetic effect of the novel.
- It will provide a deeper understanding of how surrealism contributes to the narrative, character development, and themes of "*Exit West*," and to assess the impact of this surrealistic style on the reader's experience of the novel.
- The findings of the study will offer a new perspective on "*Exit West*" by highlighting the surrealist elements of the novel that have received less critical attention, and to contribute to the broader discourse on the relationship between literature and surrealism.

Literature Review

In contemporary literature, the use of surrealism has continued to be prevalent, providing writers with a creative outlet to explore complex themes and ideas (Leal, 2015).

Surrealism is a movement that began in the 1920s that sought to liberate the imagination by tapping into the unconscious mind and to create art and literature that challenged traditional forms and conventions (Blythe & Sweet, 2006). This was achieved through techniques such as automatism, collage, and the use of dream-like imagery, which served to subvert rational thought and explore the irrational and emotional aspects of human experience.

Surrealism explores the unconscious mind and the irrational elements of human experience, often through the use of dream-like imagery and the subversion of traditional forms

(Koon, 2012). It has been found that surrealism has had a profound impact on literature and art, providing a creative outlet for writers and artists to challenge conventional thinking and explore complex themes and ideas (Ousby, 2006).

Akçam (2021) has examined surrealism and magical realism in Hamid's novel, and how these elements contribute to a unique perspective on the experience of migration. The article argues that Hamid's use of surrealism allows him to explore the emotional and psychological experiences of the characters in a way that is not possible with a strictly realist approach. Akçam discusses the role of doors in the novel, and how they function as both physical and metaphorical thresholds that allow the characters to move between different spaces and realities. The article also explores the political and historical contexts of the novel, particularly the refugee crisis and the legacy of colonialism, and how Hamid's use of surrealism allows him to challenge and subvert dominant narratives around these issues. Akçam argues that "Exit West" offers a new and nuanced portrayal of migration that is not limited by traditional realist forms, and that the use of surrealism contributes to this new perspective.

Dezfouli and Solhjoo (2019) have explored the use of surrealism and magical realism in Hamid's novel and how these elements contribute to the narrative of migration and displacement. The article discusses the use of doors in the novel, and how they function as a surreal element that allows the characters to move between different spaces and realities, creating a sense of ambiguity and fluidity that mirrors the experience of migration. The writers also analyze the role of time in the novel, and how the use of surrealism allows Hamid to play with temporal boundaries, creating a sense of non-linear time that further highlights the characters' displacement. The article also discusses the use of magic realism in the novel, particularly the portrayal of the characters' emotions and experiences, and how this creates a sense of universality that allows readers to connect with the characters and their struggles. Overall, the article argues that the use of surrealism and magical realism in "Exit West" allows Hamid to create a unique narrative of migration that is not limited by traditional realist forms, and that these elements contribute to the novel's exploration of displacement, trauma, and the search for a sense of belonging.

Gurr (2019) has remarked that *Exit West* examines the surrealist elements particularly its use of magical realism and dream-like sequences to explore the themes of migration, displacement, and belonging. Gurr argues that the surreal aspects of the novel challenge conventional notions of reality and disrupt linear narratives, creating a space for readers to engage with the emotional and psychological experiences of the characters. He also explores the connections between Hamid's use of surrealism and the political and historical contexts of the novel, including the refugee crisis and the legacy of colonialism. Gurr ultimately argues that the use of surrealism in "Exit West" allows Hamid to create a more nuanced and empathetic portrayal of migration and displacement, and invites readers to consider the human stories behind the headlines.

Mahapatra (2021) has focused on the representation of the migrant psyche and survival. The thesis argues that the use of surrealism in the novel allows Hamid to create a complex and nuanced portrayal of the migrant experience that challenges dominant narratives around migration and displacement. The study examines the ways in which the novel uses surrealist elements to explore themes of identity, belonging, and trauma, and how these themes are shaped by postcolonial histories and power dynamics. The study provides a detailed analysis of the use of surrealism in "Exit West" and its contribution to the readers' understanding of the migrant experience.

Moreno (2019) has assessed the role of surrealism in Mohsin Hamid's novel "Exit West" and its portrayal of displacement. The study argues that the use of surrealism in the novel allows Hamid to create a unique narrative that explores the psychological and emotional impact of displacement, and how individuals navigate their sense of identity and belonging in unfamiliar spaces. The study analyzes the ways in which the novel uses surreal elements such as doors and dreams to create a sense of ambiguity and fluidity that reflects the experience of displacement. The study provides a detailed analysis of the use of surrealism in "Exit West" and how it contributes to our understanding of displacement and the human experience.

In their study Najafian and Marandis (2018) have explored the surrealist and magical realist elements in Hamid's novel, and how these elements can be read as a form of resistance against the dominant narratives of migration and displacement. The article argues that Hamid's use of surrealism allows him to challenge the Western gaze on migration and to reframe the narrative from the perspective of the migrants themselves. The authors discuss the role of borders, time, and space in the novel, and how the surreal elements disrupt conventional notions of these concepts, creating a space for alternative narratives and perspectives. They also analyze the character of Saeed as a representation of the postcolonial subject, and how his journey through the novel reflects the experience of migration and the search for a sense of belonging. Overall, the article argues that "Exit West" offers a new and unique perspective on the experience of migration, and that its surrealist elements play an important role in this reimagining of the narrative.

Okur's study (2020) provides a surrealist reading of Mohsin Hamid's "Exit West," examining the ways in which surrealism is used to convey the complex and often contradictory emotions and experiences of migration. It is argued that the use of surrealism in the novel provides a means of representing the magical and transformative aspects of migration, while also highlighting the violence and trauma that can accompany it. The study investigates the ways in which the novel uses surreal elements such as doors and portals to explore themes of identity, home, and belonging, and how these themes are shaped by the experience of migration. The study has given a detailed analysis of the use of surrealism in "Exit West" and its contribution to our understanding of migration and the human experience.

Onal (2021) has argued that the use of surrealism in the novel allows Hamid to create a space for readers to engage with the emotional and psychological experiences of the characters, particularly the trauma and uncertainty of migration. Onal explores the role of doors in the novel, and how they function as a surreal element that allows the characters to move between different spaces and realities, highlighting the theme of displacement and the search for a sense of belonging. The article also discusses the political and historical contexts of the novel, particularly the refugee crisis and the legacy of colonialism, and how the use of surrealism can be read as a form of resistance against dominant narratives around these issues. Overall, the article argues that "Exit West" is a powerful example of the use of surrealism in literature, and that its contribution to the narrative of migration and displacement is significant.

Textual Analysis

Magical realism

According to Böhme (2014), magical realism is a technique that "breaks down the distinction between the real and the fantastic" (p. 111). In *Exit West*, Hamid employs magical realism to create a sense of otherworldliness and to blur the lines between reality and fantasy. For example,

when Nadia and Saeed enter a door that transports them from one place to another, the act is presented in a matter-of-fact manner, without any attempt to explain the mechanics of the doors or how they work. This surreal element serves to highlight the sense of displacement experienced by the characters as they are forced to leave their home and venture into the unknown.

Rumors had begun to circulate of doors that could take you elsewhere, often to places far away, well removed from this death trap of a country. Some people claimed to know people who knew people who had been through such doors. A normal door, they said, could become a special door, and it could happen without warning, to any door at all.

The magical door is introduced as a rumor, something that people have only heard about through second- or third-hand accounts. The language used to describe the doors is matter-of-fact and unembellished, which is characteristic of magical realism. While the concept of a door that can transport people to another place seems fantastical, it is presented as a normal part of the characters' reality. The use of the word "elsewhere" instead of a specific location also adds to the surreal atmosphere of the passage. It suggests that the doors can take people to any number of places, some of which may be beyond the bounds of the characters' imagination. The extract is a prime example of how "Exit West" blends the fantastical with the everyday, and how the magical door serves as a metaphor for the characters' desire for escape and the uncertainty that comes with it. The readers find magical realism through the use of the phrase "keys on a string," which is a metaphorical phrase that takes on a literal meaning. The phrase implies that these clerics and vigilantes believe they can control God's wrath and that they hold the keys to it. The magical realism comes in with the literal interpretation of the metaphor, that the keys are physical objects on a string, which is impossible in reality. This blending of the metaphorical and the literal is a hallmark of magical realism, as it challenges the notions of what is possible and real.

Saeed and Nadia kept coming back to the magical doors. One day they went through one. It was a normal door, and they stepped through it and they were no longer in the city.

The extract exemplifies how "Exit West" incorporates elements of magical realism into its narrative. The doors, which are described as magical, are presented as a normal part of the characters' reality, rather than something that is overtly fantastical. The fact that Saeed and Nadia can step through a regular-looking door and be transported to a new location adds a sense of the surreal and the otherworldly to the story. Additionally, the language used in this passage is straightforward and unadorned, which is a hallmark of magical realism. The author presents the magical doors matter-of-factly, as if they are an ordinary occurrence in this world. It is an example of how "Exit West" blends the real and the unreal, and how the characters' experiences with the magical doors highlight their desire for escape and their search for a better life.

When Nadia and Saeed escape through a door, they find themselves in an alternate version of reality, one where time seems to move at a different pace and the laws of physics are suspended. This surreal element underscores the characters' sense of disorientation and alienation, as they struggle to adapt to their new surroundings.

Power and dominance of dream

Their dreams were separate and degree, and the half of them they remembered upon waking differed, and they might have agreed to hold those dreams in common and examine them, as soldiers might divide their provisions and sit around a fire eating together, but they did not.

The separate and differing dreams of the characters reflect the power dynamics between them. The characters are unable to come together and share their dreams, even though it might bring them closer and help them understand each other better. The use of the metaphor of soldiers dividing their provisions emphasizes the idea that the characters are in a constant state of

conflict, with each person guarding their own resources and power. The repetition of the word "differed" emphasizes the divide between the characters, and the fact that they "did not" come together suggests a missed opportunity for connection and collaboration. This passage highlights the ways in which power can create distance between individuals and prevent them from working together towards a common goal. The extract shows how the theme of dominance and power is intertwined with the characters' dreams, reflecting the complex and often fraught relationships between people in times of crisis.

Saeed dreamed that he had to carry Nadia on his back, and he woke up sweating, and stayed awake for the rest of the night. In the morning he told her about the dream, and she said, 'I've had that one too.'

Saeed's dream of carrying Nadia on his back symbolizes the burden and responsibility he feels for her. The fact that he wakes up sweating and stays awake for the rest of the night shows the intensity of his emotions and the weight of his perceived duty. Nadia's response to Saeed's dream is also significant, as she reveals that she has had the same dream. This suggests that she may also feel the pressure of Saeed's expectations and the power dynamic that exists between them. The extract highlights how dreams can be used to convey dominance and power dynamics in relationships, and how they can reveal the subconscious fears and desires of the characters

Dislocation and disorientation

Pakistan was for Saeed and Nadia not only their own country but a large part of their known world, and their departure from it was, in some sense, a tearing apart of the fabric of their lives. They spoke Punjabi and Urdu and English, and when they looked out the window of the plane as it taxied along the runway they saw a landscape that was mostly brown, and then green, and then white, and then blue, and then a jigsaw of fields and houses and roads that looked to Saeed like a shattered mirror, the fragments just about holding together, in no particular order.

The extract describes the dislocation and disorientation experienced by the characters, Saeed and Nadia, as they leave their familiar world behind and embarks on a journey to an unknown place. The language used in the passage conveys a sense of fragmentation and disorder, as the characters observe a landscape that appears to be in disarray, with no clear structure or order. The metaphor of the shattered mirror reinforces this idea of brokenness and instability, and the fact that the fragments are "just about holding together" suggests that the characters themselves are struggling to maintain their sense of coherence and stability in the face of this dislocation. Overall, this passage captures the disorienting experience of leaving behind one's familiar world and navigating the uncertainty of a new and unfamiliar one.

The streets were new to Nadia, with none of the habitual routes she took marked in her mind. She did not know the names of any of the buildings, and the only shop she recognized was a small supermarket. They walked for a while, and Nadia felt herself to be in a bewildering dream, as though she had fallen asleep at home and now woken up in a fairy tale, the kind set in a distant forest, and she had no idea how to get back home.

Here Nadia is shown disoriented and dislocated in a new place. The unfamiliar streets and buildings make her feel like she's in a dream, and she's struggling to navigate her way around. The reference to a fairy tale suggests a sense of surrealism and unreality, further emphasizing the disorientation she feels. Overall, this passage conveys the sense of dislocation and disorientation that can come with being in a new and unfamiliar

Exploration of the subconscious

Often, the subconscious was the carrier of the most vital parts of a person, the hardest to convey in words: the emotions, the images, the epiphanies that seemed to come out of nowhere but could

burn themselves into a person's soul forever. And yet these parts were often inaccessible to others, and sometimes even to one.

Hamid discusses the subconscious mind and how it carries important parts of a person that are difficult to express in words. The passage suggests that the subconscious can hold emotions, images, and epiphanies that can have a profound impact on a person's soul. However, these parts can be difficult to access, even for the individual themselves. It is indicated that the subconscious is a powerful force in shaping a person's experiences and perceptions, and it is often difficult to fully understand its impact.

Many others also dreamed, and these dreams were harder to differentiate from waking life, for the passage from one to the other was seamless, as if they inhabited a world where reality was not absolute, but porous, and the membrane between the two could be easily breached.

The extract shows the characters' subconscious minds because it describes the blurred line between dreams and waking life. The characters' experiences in the dream world are so real and vivid that they are difficult to distinguish from their waking experiences. This suggests that their subconscious minds are heavily influencing their perceptions of reality. The use of the word "porous" also suggests that there is permeability between the conscious and subconscious minds. The breaching of the membrane between reality and dreams may represent the characters' desires and fears seeping into their waking lives. Despite being a short passage, it reveals a lot about the characters' psychological states and how their subconscious minds shape their experiences

The Uncanny

Panic rose in her chest: the door to the living room was closed. It had been open a moment ago, when she entered the house. She pushed it, and it refused to move. She pushed it again, and again it refused. She heard a noise behind her and turned. The door to the bedroom was closed too. She pushed it, and again it refused to move. She pushed it harder, and it still refused.

Nadia's experience is described as she enters a house in a new location. Suddenly, she realizes that the doors that were open a moment ago are now closed and won't budge. This creates a sense of disorientation and panic for her, as the familiar and expected is now strange and unpredictable. This feeling of the uncanny is a recurring theme in "Exit West", as the characters navigate the strange and shifting landscapes of their world. This passage is particularly effective in conveying this sense of the uncanny through the description of the doors that won't open, leaving Nadia feeling trapped and uncertain.

On the tube platform, waiting for a train to take them to Harrods, he realized that he had never before seen so many Londoners in one place who were not White. It was like being in a different city. It was like being in a city that was not London.

Saeed is experiencing the uncanny, a feeling of strangeness or eeriness that arises when something familiar becomes unfamiliar. The protagonist is in London, a city he knows well, but the sudden presence of so many non-white Londoners creates a feeling of disorientation and unfamiliarity. The use of the phrase "like being in a different city" reinforces this sense of strangeness, as if the familiar London has been replaced by something else. This passage shows how the uncanny can arise from the unexpected collision of different cultures or experiences.

The liberation of desire

Slowly, steadily, Nadia and Saeed fell in love. It was an old-fashioned but an old-fashionedness that was so extreme it was almost new; it involved a magnificent obsession with the details of each other's lives. A sudden preoccupation with the weather, and the traffic, and what to have for dinner, and what films to watch. They would go on long walks, and after every walk they would hold each other close and speak, in hushed voices, about what they had seen. They both

felt enveloped by a sense of newness, that the world itself had just been created, and they were the first to experience it.

The extract describes the liberation of desire by depicting the way Nadia and Saeed become obsessed with the details of each other's lives, and their sudden preoccupation with everyday things like the weather, traffic, and what to have for dinner. This focus on the present moment and the senses, as well as the way in which they speak in hushed voices about what they've seen, suggests a newfound sense of intimacy and connection. The way in which they feel enveloped by a sense of newness, as though the world itself has just been created, suggests a sense of liberation from the constraints of everyday life and a newfound appreciation for the present moment.

Disinterested play of chance

They reached Mykonos, an island in the Aegean Sea. It was beautiful but the wrong island, and they got on a ferry to another island, but that was the wrong island too, and they were laughing now at the absurdity of it all, and then the ferry they were on was turned back by the Greek coast guard, and they were taken to a detention center for migrants, where they slept on the ground in a large room filled with cots, and Nadia smoked cigarettes she bought from a man who walked around with a pack of them and sold them for five euros each, and Saeed paced and prayed, and they were asked again and again to fill out forms, and Nadia managed to buy a cell phone and call her uncle, who arranged for their release, and they took a ferry to a third island, and there, finally, they boarded a smuggler's inflatable motorboat, ten meters long and overcrowded, and set out to sea.

The disinterested play of chance is presented by depicting the way in which Nadia and Saeed's journey is marked by a series of accidental events that are beyond their control. The wrong island, the ferry being turned back by the coast guard, the detention center, and the need to fill out forms all point to the way in which their journey is governed by forces beyond their control. The absurdity of it all and the way in which they laugh at the situation suggests a kind of acceptance of the whims of chance.

The exquisite corpse

They stopped to look at a window display of wooden toys, and then they sat on a bench in a small park, and a trio of children played the game called Exquisite Corpse, folding a piece of paper into thirds and drawing a head, a torso, and legs, in turn, without looking at what the others had drawn, so that the final creature was a combination of various styles and body types, and Saeed thought of his city as such an exquisite corpse, and he saw its veins and arteries as narrow roads, its clustered neighborhoods as organs, and the militants manning checkpoints were like white blood cells attacking disease, and he felt, amid his fear and confusion, a measure of pride.

This passage shows the exquisite corpse by presenting the way in which Saeed sees his city as a combination of different styles and body types, much like the creature in the Exquisite Corpse game. The narrow roads and clustered neighborhoods are compared to veins, arteries, and organs, and the militants manning checkpoints are likened to white blood cells attacking disease. This comparison highlights the way in which the city is a living organism, made up of different parts that work together to create a whole. The fact that Saeed feels a measure of pride amid his fear and confusion suggests that he is able to find meaning in the chaos and destruction around him, and that he is able to appreciate the beauty and complexity of the city even in its darkest moments.

Juxtaposition

The streets were filled with the smells of gunpowder and blood, and a great number of the bodies were missing limbs, and the militants made no effort to retrieve them, so that they might not slow the living. At the same time, some people continued to go to work, and others to the market, and there were new films out in the cinemas, and some restaurants remained open, so that even on the most violent of days the city was always partly alive.

Juxtaposition can be noticed in the presentation of the violence and chaos of the city alongside the mundane aspects of daily life. The first sentence describes the graphic aftermath of a violent incident, with the streets filled with the smells of gunpowder and blood, and many missing limbs. However, the following sentences show that life goes on despite the violence. Some people continue to go to work and to the market, new films are being released in cinemas, and some restaurants remain open. This contrast highlights the resilience and adaptability of people, who are able to continue with their lives even in the face of extreme adversity.

Resolution of contradictions

Saeed's father had always spoken fondly of his own father, who had died before Saeed was born, and now that Saeed's father was gone too, Saeed was finally able to picture his grandfather, and as he did so he realized that he was picturing himself, for his father's father had possessed the same chin hair that Saeed had grown since his father's death, and this had happened not as a result of some mysterious passage of the generations but because Saeed's grandfather had been a dandy, a man who wore his mustache and goatee and chin tuft with the same fastidious attention that Saeed himself devoted to his appearance, and thus this improbable set of whiskers had survived and been passed down through the bloodline.

A resolution of contradictions is presented in a seemingly impossible connection between generations. Saeed's father had always spoken fondly of his own father, but had passed away before Saeed was able to meet him. However, as Saeed pictures his grandfather, he realizes that he is picturing himself, as they share the same distinctive facial hair. This connection between generations is explained by the fact that Saeed's grandfather was a dandy, someone who was known for his impeccable sense of style and grooming, just like Saeed. This resolution of contradictory elements, the connection between a man who lived long ago and the present, is a reminder of the power of tradition and the ways in which it is possible to maintain connections even in the face of great change.

The presence of the marvelous

There was a brief commotion as people jostled and pushed their way through, some trying to force their way in, others trying to flee, and then they emerged onto a broad expanse of cracked and cratered asphalt, and the world changed. Behind them lay the city, and before them lay the sea. The sea was vast and gray and etched by white-capped waves, and it was so beautiful that Saeed and Nadia could hardly believe it. It was a majestic and inspiring sight, and for some it induced a sense almost of religious awe, and this was true too for Saeed and Nadia, but the sight also made them feel, for the first time since they had left their city, that they had left it for good.

The presence of the marvelous can be marked by a transformative experience that changes the characters' perception of the world around them. Saeed and Nadia are in the midst of chaos, trying to flee a city that is being torn apart by violence, when they come across a door that takes them to a different place. When they emerge from the door, they find themselves on the shore of a vast sea, and the beauty of the sight is so overwhelming that it induces a sense of religious awe in them. The sight of the sea is transformative, and it makes them feel as though

they have left their old lives behind for good. The marvellous element in this passage lies in the suddenness and unexpectedness of the characters' encounter with the sea, which transforms their perception of the world around them.

Pure psychic automation

The dreams were pure psychic automation, and when he woke from them his heart would be pounding and his hands damp, and it would take him a while to realize where he was, in his own bed in the apartment where he lived with Nadia, and then it would take him a while longer to quiet himself, to find a way to push the dream world away and return to the day-to-day world.

The above passage demonstrates pure psychic automation by describing Saeed's dreams as being beyond his conscious control. The dreams are "pure psychic automation," implying that they are automatic and beyond his control, and they cause him to experience intense physical and emotional reactions. When he wakes from the dreams, it takes him some time to realize where he is and to calm himself down. The use of the phrase "push the dream world away" suggests that the dream world is separate from the day-to-day world of waking life, and that it requires effort to return to the present. This passage suggests that Saeed's experiences of pure psychic automation are linked to the stress and trauma of his life as a refugee, and that they are beyond his conscious control.

Conclusion

To cut the long story short it may be said that the use of surrealism in *Exit West* is seen as a powerful literary tool because it allows the author to convey the experiences and emotions of his characters in a more vivid and imaginative way. Major surrealistic techniques used in the novel are magical realism, dominance and power of dream, pure psyche automation, the uncanny, disorientation and dislocation, liberation of self, pure psychic automation, and the exploration of subconscious. The novel deals with themes of migration, displacement, and the search for identity, which can be difficult to capture through traditional narrative techniques. By using surrealism, the author is able to break free from the constraints of realism and delve deeper into the psychological and emotional reality of his characters. Hamid has employed elements of Surrealism to depict the emotional and psychological struggles of characters caught in the midst of a global refugee crisis. Through the use of surreal imagery and magical realism, Hamid creates a dreamlike world that blurs the boundaries between reality and fantasy, allowing the reader to experience the disorienting and traumatic effects of displacement and loss.

Exit West highlights the presence of surrealist elements in the language and imagery of the novel, noting the use of dream sequences and fantastical descriptions of the characters' surroundings. These techniques serve to further emphasize the psychological and emotional realities of migration and displacement, which often defy traditional narrative structures and realism. Surrealism in *Exit West* is characterized by a focus on the irrational and the unconscious, a rejection of traditional modes of thought and expression, an embrace of the absurd and the fantastic, a sense of social critique, and a willingness to experiment with language and form. Mohsin Hamid has used surrealism and magical realism to express the emotional and psychological trauma of the refugee crisis. By blending elements of fantasy and reality, Hamid creates a powerful and evocative depiction of displacement and loss. Through the use of surrealism and magical realism, the writer had challenged dominant narratives about the refugee crisis and reveals the social and political forces that shape it. Undoubtedly, "Exit West" stands as a testament to the enduring relevance of surrealism and magical realism in contemporary literature.

Conclusively, Hamid's use of surrealism in *Exit West* serves to challenge traditional notions of identity and belonging. As noted by Said (2017), the novel deconstructs the idea of a fixed identity and instead presents identity as a fluid and dynamic construct. Through the use of surreal elements, Hamid underscores the malleability of identity and the way in which it can shift and change in response to external forces. *Exit West* employs elements of Surrealism to depict the emotional and psychological struggles of characters caught in the midst of a global refugee crisis. Through the use of surreal imagery and magical realism, Hamid creates a dreamlike world that blurs the boundaries between reality and fantasy, allowing the reader to experience the disorienting and traumatic effects of displacement and loss.

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