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Navigating Global Migration: An Analysis of *Exit West* through Appadurai's Five Scapes

Küresel Göçte Yol Bulmak: Appadurai'nin Beş Alanı Üzerinden Exit West'in Analizi

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ABSTRACT
The rapid surge in global migration today is deeply intertwined with shifts in the political and economic structures of the late twentieth century, characterized by the dominance of globalization and transnational capital. These shifts, while rooted in the historical legacies of colonialism, have assumed new dimensions as globalization reconfigures the movement of people, capital, and ideas. In *Exit West*, Mohsin Hamid connects the personal experiences of migration with larger global forces, using magical doors to metaphorically illustrate the fluidity and unpredictability of global migration patterns. This paper employs Arjun Appadurai's five "scapes," which are *ethnoscapes*, *technoscapes*, *financescapes*, *mediascapes*, and *ideoscapes*, to examine how *Exit West* reflects and critiques the dynamics of globalization, migration, and identity formation. Hamid highlights how technological advancements facilitate movement while simultaneously revealing the inequalities that persist under the guise of globalization. Through the journeys of Saeed and Nadia, the novel reveals the fragmented nature of global flows and their impact on personal and collective identities.

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Introduction

Exit West by Mohsin Hamid, published in 2017, is a novel that has attracted much attention for its timely exploration of migration, identity, and the impact of ongoing wars, highlighting how refugees are shaped as "a creation of the twentieth-century state" (Said, 1984, p.7). Winner of the 2018 Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Fiction and the inaugural Aspen Words Literary Prize, the novel was also selected as one of The New York Times Book Review's 10 Best Books of 2017 and shortlisted for the 2017 Man Booker Prize. The novel centers on a young couple, Saeed and Nadia, who are compelled to flee their war-torn and unnamed city. During their journey, Hamid integrates magical realism by introducing mysterious black doors that allow them to travel instantly between cities. Through these doors, Hamid sidesteps the often tragic and brutal realities of migration, such as perilous sea crossings and treacherous land routes, and instead offering a narrative that emphasizes the fundamental right to migrate (Asaad, 2020, pp. 77-78). The doors serve as a metaphor for the rapid and often disorienting nature of global migration, allowing Hamid to explore the intersections of personal and collective identities in a world increasingly defined by

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movement and change.

To better understand the global flows depicted in *Exit West*, Arjun Appadurai's concept of the five "scapes" from his work *Modernity at Large* offers a valuable lens. Appadurai's perspective proves invaluable because it connects the characters' experiences to broader global patterns, suggesting that migration is not simply a movement from one place to another but an immersion in shifting landscapes influenced by technology, finance, and shared cultural imaginaries. Rather than focusing solely on individual struggles, Appadurai's scapes reveal how *Exit West* captures migration as a defining feature of modernity, where identity and belonging are shaped by both local and transnational forces. The use of an anthropologist's framework thus feels not only appropriate but essential in unpacking the full dimensions of Hamid's work, which speaks to the complex realities of migration in a world that is increasingly interconnected and in flux. Appadurai outlines five dimensions, such as *ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes,* and *ideoscapes*, through which global cultural flows can be understood (1996, pp. 33-37). *Ethnoscape* captures the movement of people, such as migrants and refugees, a theme central to Saeed and Nadia's journey as they traverse multiple cultural and geographical landscapes. *Technoscape*, reflecting the global spread of technology, is embodied in the novel by the magical doors that facilitate instant travel. These doors symbolize the ways technology connects distant places and people, yet also underscore the disorienting effects of such rapid changes on individuals and societies. *Financescape*, which encompasses the movement of capital and economic resources, underpins much of the migration in the novel. The economic disparities that drive the characters to seek better lives elsewhere mirror the broader economic forces shaping global migration today, highlighting the impact of financial flows on personal decisions and destinies. *Mediascape*, representing the influence of media in shaping perceptions of reality, is evident in the characters' interactions with the outside world. Media plays a role in determining the desirability of certain destinations, influencing how and where people choose to move. Finally, *ideoscape* refers to the flow of political ideas and ideologies, which profoundly affects the characters' understanding of their identities and the societies they enter. This aspect is especially relevant for Saeed, whose interactions with religious groups highlight the complex interplay between faith and cultural identity in unfamiliar environments, influencing his understanding of self and community in the midst of his migratory journey. Thus, the aim of this study is to examine how *Exit West* engages with Appadurai's five scapes, positioning the novel within broader discourses on migration, globalization, and identity as Saeed and Nadia navigate a world where traditional boundaries are increasingly fluid. Through an analysis of both globalization and postcolonialism, this paper aims to interrogate the complex dynamics at play in contemporary global relations, with particular attention to how global economic, political, and cultural systems continue to exert control over formerly colonized regions.

Globalization and Postcolonialism

Manfred B. Steger defines globalization in *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* as: "a set of social processes that appear to transform our present social condition of conventional nationality into one of globality" (2009, p. 8). Steger elaborates on this by describing globalization as the intensification of worldwide social relations that link distant localities, such that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away. Globalization, in its most basic understanding, refers to the increasing interconnectedness of nations, economies, and cultures in a way that transcends traditional boundaries, particularly since the late 20th century (Nayar, 2015, p. 85).

Similarly, for Ashcroft et al., globalization is the process by which local communities and individual lives are influenced by worldwide economic and cultural forces, essentially making the world feel like a single place (2007, p. 127). This idea reflects the increasing permeability of borders and the diminishing relevance of traditional nation-states as sole actors in international affairs. Ashcroft

et al. highlights the transition from older terms like "international" and "international relations," underscoring how these earlier concepts are rooted in a world dominated by territorial states, largely a product of European imperialism (2007, p. 127). This destabilization raises critical questions about the relevance of concepts such as nation-state, sovereignty, and cultural homogeneity in the contemporary world. Scholars like Roger Rouse argue that these changes necessitate new theoretical approaches that account for the fluidity and fragmentation that characterize modern life (cited in Behdad, 2005, p. 65). As old paradigms of identity and community lose their explanatory power, it becomes increasingly important to explore how individuals navigate the overlapping spaces of economy, culture, and politics in a globalized world (cited in Behdad, 2005, p. 65).

The relationship between globalization and postcolonialism has emerged as a significant point of intersection in contemporary theoretical discussions. Scholars of postcolonialism have long examined the enduring legacies of European colonialism, focusing on the socio-political, economic, and cultural impacts on formerly colonized regions. However, in recent decades, the accelerating processes of globalization have introduced a new set of challenges and opportunities for postcolonial critique (McLeod, 2010, p. 174). Globalization, with its transnational flows of capital, people, information, and culture, has often been described as a form of neo-imperialism, where power is no longer exclusively tied to the nation-state but is dispersed across global institutions and networks (McLeod, 2010, p. 174).

Globalization has emerged as a transformative force reshaping economic, political, and cultural dynamics on a global scale, often in ways that bypass traditional forms of authority, such as the nation-state (McLeod, 2010, p. 174). As transnational institutions, multinational corporations, and global financial networks exert growing influence, the balance of power has shifted away from localized governance to entities that operate across borders. This new reality raises critical questions about the distribution of power and the socioeconomic disparities that arise from this process (McLeod, 2010, p. 174). The shift from direct colonial rule to transnational economic and technological control has raised questions about whether the end of colonialism truly marked the end of imperial structures:

> We might like to think of globalization as a form of imperialism by remote control, one which no longer requires colonial settlement but which can obtain power over other locations and peoples – their resources, cultural and social activities, and wealth – precisely with recourse to the new technologies and '- scapes' which characterize the contemporary. (McLeod, 2010, p. 175)

The quote explores how globalization can be viewed as a new form of imperialism, where the traditional models of colonial settlement have been replaced by more remote methods of control and domination. As globalization has unfolded, it has become increasingly apparent that power operates through complex networks, often centered around multinational corporations (TNCs), financial institutions, and global governance bodies, which exert significant influence over resources, labor, and policy decisions across the world (McLeod, 2010, p. 176). Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, in *Empire*, argue that globalization represents a new "Empire," one that mirrors colonialism in its hierarchical power dynamics but is more diffuse and pervasive in its methods of control (2000, p. 43).

In postcolonial studies, globalization is essential for understanding modern power dynamics rooted in historical imperialism (Ashcroft et al., 2007, p. 128). Globalization today reflects the resistance once exhibited by colonized societies; it has evolved from overt colonial rule into complex systems of economic, communicative, and cultural influence (Ashcroft et al., p. 129). The U.S., often posited as a leading global force, exemplifies this shift, linking classical imperialism to

modern global influence through mass culture and elite-driven policies rather than direct colonization (Ashcroft et al., p. 129). Stuart Hall adds that contemporary globalization, largely American in nature, spreads predominantly through political and cultural elite channels (1991, pp. 27-8).

The relationship between globalization and postcolonialism has generated diverse responses among postcolonial theorists on whether globalization is simply a new phase of imperialism. Hardt and Negri argue that globalization has significantly weakened nation-states, promoting global uniformity that subordinates weaker economies (2000, p. 43). In contrast, Benita Parry contends that while globalization brings new controls, it does not fully negate the gains of postcolonial resistance, and national sovereignty remains relevant (Parry, 2004, pp. 93-103). The ethical implications of globalization are also central to postcolonial discourse. Kwame Anthony Appiah's "cosmopolitanism" advocates for balancing universal ethical obligations with respect for cultural diversity (Appiah, 2006, p. xiii). Paul Gilroy's "vernacular cosmopolitanism" similarly emphasizes ethical engagements with cultural differences through everyday encounters (Gilroy, 2004, p. 75). The role of postcolonial literature in global markets also reflects globalization's complexity. Authors like Salman Rushdie have achieved international acclaim, yet critics argue this success risks commodifying cultural differences, appealing to Western audiences for exoticism rather than challenging colonial perspectives (McLeod, 2010, p. 177).

Globalization, then, is multifaceted and contested, with some viewing it as a democratizing force and others as a driver of inequality (Ashcroft et al., p. 127). The stance of "critical globalism" avoids binary views, instead recognizing both the harms and benefits of globalization, such as economic growth alongside environmental concerns (Ashcroft et al., p. 128). In parallel, the concept of cosmopolitanism embodies the ethical and cultural responses to globalization, where critical frameworks like Johansen's "territorialized cosmopolitanism" highlight an ethical commitment to both local identities and global responsibilities (Johansen, 2008, p. 2). Together, globalization and cosmopolitanism capture the complex interplay of global structures and cultural responses, reflecting how individuals and societies negotiate the balance between global interconnectedness and local specificity in a world of fluid identities and permeable borders.

Arjun Appadurai and Globalization

Arjun Appadurai's conceptualization of globalization provides a perspective that captures the fluidity and unpredictability of global processes. In his book Modernity *at Large,* Arjun Appadurai talks about the idea of "post-nation" and "postnational" to explain what happens in the world during globalization. He uses these terms to explain three key points about globalization. First, he argues that globalization renders the nation-state, the traditional form of government, to become outdated: "We are in the process of moving to a global order in which the nation-state has become obsolete, and other formations for allegiance and identity have taken its place" (1996, p. 169). Second, Appadurai talks about new ways to organize the flow of resources, images, and ideas around the world (1996, p. 169). These new forms either challenge the nation-state or offer peaceful alternatives for large-scale political loyalties (Appadurai, 1996, p. 169). In this view, the nation-state is no longer the only or even the best way to manage these global flows. Third, he introduces the concept of "diasporic nationalisms," which refers to national identities that exist beyond physical territories, as the nation-state can no longer monopolize people's loyalties as it once did (Appadurai, 1996, p. 169). In illustrating his point, Appadurai cites the United States, emphasizing how its political system, built on pluralism, allows different immigrant communities to establish what he terms "delocalized transnations" (1996, p. 172). These groups maintain a special connection to their place of origin, but they have become entirely diasporic, meaning their members live and function outside their homeland. Appadurai's assertion that the nation-state is diminishing due to the increasing openness of borders, driven by global politics and free-trade

zones, highlights how globalization is shaping culture. (1996, p. 172).

The next issue to consider about Appadurai's view of globalization is how he sees the diaspora and its potential to bring about positive change. Appadurai regards the presence of diasporic communities in the United States as something beneficial (1996, p. 173). He believes that these communities are important for shaping a new kind of "postnational politics" (1996, p. 173). By this, he means a type of political thinking that moves beyond national borders. In the U.S., there is often a conflict between the aim to maintain a unified American identity, which Appadurai calls the "centripetal pull of Americanness," and the presence of diverse immigrant groups bringing different cultural backgrounds, which he terms the "centrifugal pull of diasporic diversity" (1996, p. 173). This new form of politics could help solve the tension between the pull of being American and the pull of maintaining a diverse, diasporic identity. In other words, Appadurai argues that these transnational communities force American society to deal with the challenges of diversity and immigration. They push the U.S. to build a society that embraces and is centered around the variety brought by different diasporic groups.

Appadurai argues that the emergence of these "delocalized transnations," communities connected to multiple locations rather than just one, compels American society to confront significant question (1996, p. 172). These include how to accommodate diversity and how to build a society that is inclusive of immigrants. Essentially, the presence of diasporic communities challenges the idea of a singular national identity and pushes societies like the United States to become more pluralistic, meaning they must accept and integrate multiple cultures and ways of life (Appadurai, 1996, p. 173).

Appadurai emphasizes the need to focus on how mass mediation and migration interact, viewing them as key components in shaping the cultural politics of modern globalization (1994, p. 21). Electronic media enables diasporic communities to engage in common cultural and political dialogues across borders, forming "diasporic public spheres" (1996, p. 21). As exemplified by Turkish workers in Germany watching Turkish films or Pakistani cab drivers in Chicago listening to sermons from home, these mediated connections transcend nation-state boundaries and contribute to a new global order (1996, p. 4).

Parallel to advancements in information technology, Appadurai highlights the inadequacy of existing theories to explain the current global cultural economy. According to him, today's global economy features fundamental disjunctures, with noticeable separations and misalignments between its economic, cultural, and political aspects (1994, p. 33). These disjunctures create a landscape that is difficult to navigate using existing theoretical models (Appadurai, 1994, p. 32). Appadurai acknowledges the need for new frameworks that can better understand the complexities of our globalized world. The traditional approaches, whether they focus on economic relations, migration patterns, or cultural exchanges, do not fully address the ways in which these elements now interact and influence each other in unpredictable and often disjointed ways (Appadurai, 1996, p. 32). Therefore, Appadurai introduces a set of five key concepts such as *ethnoscape*s, *technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes, and ideoscapes*, as a way to understand "the conditions under which current global flows occur" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 37). Each of these "scapes" represents a different aspect of global interactions and flows, marked by fluidity and irregularity (Appadurai, 1996, p. 33). The use of the suffix "-scape" emphasizes that these dimensions are not static or universally perceived but are shaped by varying perspectives depending on historical, linguistic, and political contexts (Appadurai, 1996, p. 33).

Different groups of people, like countries, big companies, immigrant communities, and even small groups like families, see and experience these scapes in their own ways (Appadurai, 1996, p. 33). The notion of these scapes expands on Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities,"

which explains how individuals in a nation feel a sense of connection despite not knowing one another personally (Appadurai, 1996, p. 33). However, these scapes take the idea further by forming "imagined worlds," where individuals and groups shape their own realities based on their experience. Governments and businesses play a role in shaping the imagined worlds, but they are also influenced by the ways in which people perceive and respond to their surroundings (Appadurai, 1996, p. 33). Today, many people live in these imagined worlds, which gives them the power to question or even change the stories that those in power try to impose (Appadurai, 1996, p. 33). For Appadurai, this is important because it shows that the world is more complicated and diverse than simple explanations can capture (1996, p. 33). That is to say, Appadurai introduces a new way of thinking about the world that focuses on how different people and groups experience and shape global connections.

Appadurai's framework aligns with "critical globalism," which acknowledges both the benefits and inequities of globalization. He argues that while global processes are often influenced by powerful centers, local actors actively negotiate, resist, or reshape these influences within their own contexts. Therefore, Appadurai's perspective offers a complex, layered understanding of globalization that transcends simple dichotomies.

Exit West and Five "Scapes"

Arjun Appadurai's conceptualization of globalization through his framework of five "scapes" provides a critical lens for analyzing Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*, a narrative that weaves the complexities of migration and identity in a globalized world. In the novel, the fluidity of *ethnoscape* is palpable as characters navigate the challenges of displacement, revealing how their identities are shaped by the forces of globalization.

The concept of *ethnoscape* is a term that is used to capture the dynamic and fluid nature of human migration in our increasingly globalized world. Appadurai highlights how the movement of people, whether they are tourists, immigrants, refugees, or guest workers, has become a defining characteristic of our time. While there are still stable communities based on family, friendship, work, and where people live, these stable connections are often influenced by the movement of people (Appadurai, 1996, p. 33). More and more, people are dealing with the realities of needing to move or the dreams of wanting to move (Appadurai, 1996, p. 34). For example, people in villages in India now think about moving not just to nearby cities like Poona or Madras but also to places like Dubai or Houston. Refugees from Sri Lanka might end up in South India or even Switzerland, and the Hmong people might find themselves in London or Philadelphia (Appadurai, 1996, p. 34). As global economic needs change and governments adjust their policies on refugees, these moving groups cannot afford to settle down for too long, even if they want to. *Ethnoscapes* are deeply tied to the idea of transnational flows and the deterritorialization of culture, where identities and cultural practices are no longer strictly bound by geography or national borders.

Similarly, the opening sentences of the novel Exit West describe a world where the experience of being a refugee is increasingly common, reflecting the global movement of people that Appadurai discusses with his concept of *ethnoscapes*: "In a city swollen by refugees but still mostly at peace, or at least not openly at war, a young man met a young woman in a classroom" (Hamid, 2018, p. 1). Saeed and Nadia, the two main protagonists, live in a city filled with refugees, indicating that migration and displacement are not just isolated events but a widespread reality in the contemporary world. This aligns with Appadurai's idea that the movement of people, whether they are fleeing war, seeking better opportunities, or driven by other forces, has become a central aspect of global life. Appadurai emphasizes that these moving groups not only affect the politics of nations but also embody the tension between stability and mobility in the modern world. For instance, the imagery of refugees occupying open spaces in the city, "pitching tents in the

greenbelts between roads" and "erecting lean-tos next to the boundary walls of houses," is a powerful reflection of Appadurai's *ethnoscape* (Hamid, 2018, p. 23). These scenes emphasize the unsettling presence of transient communities within urban settings, where the rhythms of normal life are both disrupted and reconstituted in makeshift environments. The sight of a family residing under a "sheet of plastic propped up with branches and a few chipped bricks" encapsulates the fragile and improvised nature of these new forms of settlement, which arise in response to the pressures of global migration and displacement (Hamid, 2018, p. 23). The refugees' presence in these spaces is emblematic of the "woof of human motion" that interweaves with the "warp" of stability (Appadurai, 1996, p. 33).

Amidst people fleeing wars and calamities, Saeed and Nadia too will soon decide to seek refuge in Western countries. As Saeed and Nadia eventually become refugees themselves, they join the broader *ethnoscapes* of individuals who are constantly on the move, shaped by the forces of globalization, conflict, and changing political landscapes. Saeed and Nadia's journey begins in a city without a name, but the three cities they access through magical doors, namely Mykonos in Greece, London in England, and Marin County in California, are all located in the global North. While the novel does not explicitly identify the first city, there is compelling evidence to suggest that it is modeled after Lahore, Pakistan. Hamid himself has stated that the unnamed city is based "in many ways on Lahore, where I have lived half my life" (Brice, 2020, p. 4).

As the characters move through each of the three cities, their different experiences illustrate the concept of *ethoscapes* in various settings. The story starts in Mykonos, where refugee camps near the coast evoke typical images of Mediterranean crossings prevalent in contemporary discussions. The novel's portrayal of a refugee camp on the Greek island of Mykonos, where people of "many colors and hues" gather around fires and speak in a "cacophony that was the languages of the world," encapsulates the essence of Appadurai's *ethnoscapes* (Hamid, 2018, p. 100). The camps are described as a microcosm of a global movement, where "everyone was foreign, and so, in a sense, no one was" (Hamid, 2018, p. 100). The fluidity and diversity of this gathering of displaced individuals on Mykonos underscore the idea that in a world increasingly characterized by mobility, the traditional boundaries of nation, culture, and identity are continually being renegotiated. The camp's inhabitants, hailing from diverse backgrounds yet sharing a common experience of displacement, represent the fragmented and interconnected world that Appadurai describes.

However, Hamid does not ignore the stereotypical associations often imposed upon refugees. In this regard, Sercan Hamza Bağlama in his article *Mohsin Hamid's Exit West: Co-Opting Refugees into Global Capitalism* argues that stereotypical representations of refugees as perpetrators of violence and disorder persist through a "criminal lexis" and the novel "[…] produces many stereotypical refugee images and perceptions for the addressee belonging to mainstream white society, which, in a way, reinforces and heightens the prejudices of the western world against 'them'" (2019, p. 151). In Exit West, Hamid acknowledges this problematic framing but simultaneously seeks to deconstruct it, as stated by Bağlama (2019, p. 152). For example, the narrative depicts violent episodes involving Middle Eastern militants who cross into Vienna, carrying out acts of violence that resonate with the Western biases Bağlama describes (Hamid, 2018, pp. 104, 168, 176). Such portrayals may initially appear to confirm negative stereotypes of refugees as sources of instability, yet Hamid simultaneously uses these episodes to critique the xenophobic biases that underpin these perceptions. Rather than presenting refugees as a monolithic group, Hamid characterizes them as complex individuals, remarking that "decent people vastly outnumbered dangerous ones" (2018, p. 101).

These dynamics of inclusion and exclusion are further highlighted through the imagery of the camp's "doors out" being "heavily guarded" in contrast to the "doors in," which remain "mostly left unsecured" (Hamid, 2018, p. 101). This contrast between restricted exits and open entrances

serves as a powerful metaphor for the larger global dynamics that shape contemporary migration, reinforcing neocolonial power structures that determine who may freely move and who must remain confined. As Edward Said argues, Orientalist thought is grounded in “an imaginative and yet drastically polarized geography,” one that divides the world into two unequal parts: "the familiar, dominant Occident" or West and the "different Orient"(1981, p. 4). This binary continues to shape global perceptions, producing a worldview in which certain regions are categorized as “richer destinations” while others are designated as “poorer places” (Hamid, 2018, p. 101).

In this framework, the migrants on Mykonos find themselves caught within what Said describes as a deeply ingrained geographical hierarchy, where the West maintains a privileged, guarded status. This echoes Appadurai's observation that the movement of people is molded by "the shifting needs of international capital, technological advances, and the policies of nation-states" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 34). For these displaced individuals, who lack the agency to move "forward to richer destinations," migration is neither a straightforward nor liberating act but one tightly controlled by forces beyond their control (Hamid, 2018, p. 101). The open "doors in" may imply accessibility, but the heavily guarded "doors out" underscore the limited pathways for these migrants, reflecting a world order in which the lines of movement are starkly asymmetrical, mirroring Said's polarized geography.

This limited freedom aligns with Appadurai's assertion that these “moving groups can never afford to let their imaginations rest too long” as they are continually subjected to the economic and political demands of a global system that regards their mobility through the lens of profit and control (Appadurai, 1996, p. 34). By portraying the Mykonos camp in this manner, Hamid highlights how the “imaginative geography” described by Said continues to govern the experiences of migrants today, confining them within a global structure that perpetuates the uneven dynamics of inclusion and exclusion rooted in a colonial past.

In the novel, Hamid explores the shifting identities and experiences of displaced individuals, particularly as Saeed and Nadia migrate from Mykonos to London. Their movement into new environments underscores the themes of estrangement and realignment of identity within foreign spaces, resonating with Homi Bhabha’s concept of the "unhomely." In *The World and the Home*, Bhabha draws on Freud's ideas of *heimlich* (homely) and *unheimlich* (unhomely), reinterpreting these terms to describe the migrant experience. For Bhabha, the unhomely represents "the estranging sense of relocation of the home and the world," where distinctions between private and public, home and world, become indistinct, leading to "a vision that is divided as it is disorienting" (Bhabha, 1992, p. 141). This framework theorizes migration as an experience that disrupts conventional understandings of home, compelling individuals to reconstruct a sense of belonging in spaces where the notion of "home" may no longer hold familiar meaning.

In London, the migrant community fragments under the weight of ethnonationalist pressures and nativist violence, with refugees regrouping into clusters based on shared national or ethnic backgrounds. Saeed feels this division acutely, finding the presence of unfamiliar languages and cultures "jarring" and initially unsettling, particularly as he becomes "the only man from his country" in a house dominated by other nationalities (Hamid, 2018, pp. 129, 146). This reaction aligns with Appadurai's concept of the "delocalized transnation," a diasporic identity that remains deeply connected to an imagined place of origin, even when separated geographically. Saeed's longing for connection with those from his homeland exemplifies a form of diasporic identity, where cultural ties continue to shape one's sense of self despite physical displacement. Appadurai describes this as loyalty to a "nonterritorial transnation", which is a community that exists ideologically, grounded in cultural memories rather than in a specific geographic location (Appadurai, 1996, p. 172).

Nadia, however, resists this pull toward national affiliation. Her exchange with Saeed, "From the country we used to be from," highlights her perspective that traditional ties to one's homeland need not define identity in a globalized world (Hamid, 2018, p. 149). Nadia embodies Bhabha's concept of the unhomely by challenging the conventional boundaries that define "home." For Bhabha, the unhomely does not equate to homelessness; rather, it is a condition in which "the border between home and world becomes confused," requiring a redefinition of belonging within spaces that are both familiar and strange (Bhabha, 1992, p. 141). Nadia's reluctance to join Saeed in "their own people's house" reflects her view that identity should evolve beyond national or ethnic lines, rooted instead in shared experiences within a new and diverse environment.

This divergence in perspective underscores Nadia's openness to a cosmopolitan identity. Her reaction to nativist hostility is complex; while she recognizes its familiarity, she also finds comfort in London's diversity, noting the presence of "people of all these different colors in all these different attires" as something reassuring amidst the hostility (Hamid, 2018, p. 156). This response illustrates her readiness to engage with a fluid and adaptive sense of self, contrasting Saeed's attachment to a collective identity rooted in his homeland. Bhabha suggests that the unhomely enables individuals to "make a home" within alien spaces by creating a sense of familiarity in unfamiliar surroundings (Bhabha, 1992, p. 141). Nadia's analogy of riding her motorcycle "with the visor lifted," braving the "dust and pollution and the little bugs," symbolizes her willingness to embrace the unknown, even at the cost of comfort (Hamid, 2018, pp. 156–157).

In Marin, California, Saeed and Nadia encounter a community that epitomizes the fluidity and diversity of Appadurai's ethnoscapes. Marin, situated "on the edge of a continent" and overlooking a vast ocean, serves as a metaphor for the emergence of new global communities shaped by migration and shared experiences (Hamid, 2018, p. 193). This community offers a space where individuals from varied backgrounds converge, not as members of discrete ethnic or national groups but as participants in a broader, transnational identity. In this setting, Nadia's journey toward a cosmopolitan self reflects the possibilities of a world in which identity is not strictly tied to place but is continually renegotiated within the dynamic landscape of globalization. In contrast, Saeed's search for familiar cultural connections underscores the ongoing relevance of Appadurai's concept of transnation, as displaced individuals navigate between the pull of their past and the new horizons that lie ahead.

Appadurai's concept of technoscapes refers to the global flow of technology that crosses borders rapidly, creating complex and interconnected systems (1996, p. 34). He highlights that technology is not just about advanced machinery but also includes the movement of people with various skill levels, like engineers and laborers, who contribute to technological developments in different parts of the world. The distribution of these technologies and the movement of people are influenced by global financial flows, political conditions, and labor markets rather than just traditional economic factors. The movement of people, especially migrants, and their engagement with global technology in *Exit West* can be analyzed through the lens of technoscape. The novel features "doors" that magically transport people across borders, symbolizing the rapid and often unpredictable movement enabled by modern technology. Magical doors in the novel represent the accelerated and often unexpected movements across borders facilitated by modern technology:

> The effect doors had on people altered as well. 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. Most people thought these rumors to be nonsense, the superstitions of the feeble-minded. However, most people began to gaze at their own doors a little differently nonetheless. (Hamid, 2018, pp. 69-70)

Saeed and Nadia's travels through these doors metaphorically demonstrate how technology blurs geographical lines, paralleling Appadurai's insights on technology's ability to breach once-solid borders.

The narrative of Saeed and Nadia's journey in *Exit West* is punctuated by short, fragmentary stories featuring unnamed characters in far-off locations. These secondary narratives accentuate the simultaneity of global events, a hallmark of the interconnectedness described by Appadurai in his concept of technoscape. In one such instance, a scene unfolds in Sydney, where a pale-skinned woman is asleep in her apartment as "Saeed's email was being downloaded from a server and read by his client" (Hamid, 2018, p. 5). This moment emphasizes how global technology interlinks seemingly isolated events, with characters unaware of each other but bound by the same digital currents. Through these brief, interwoven narratives, Hamid suggests that even mundane actions, such as receiving an email, are part of a larger, interconnected network facilitated by technology, highlighting the simultaneity and reach of the *technoscape*. As these characters move between countries via the novel's magical doors, Hamid adds another layer to this global interconnectedness. The figure that emerges from a woman's closet in Australia, initially described as dark and mysterious, is later revealed to be a refugee who entered through one of these magical portals. The figure is described in an almost spectral manner, with "dark, woolly hair" and skin that appears "darker than night … a rectangle of complete darkness—the heart of darkness" (Hamid, 2018, pp. 6-7), evoking Conrad's imagery and adding a sense of foreboding to the character's sudden arrival. The intensity of this darkness, reminiscent of Conrad's "heart of darkness," carries a double meaning: it is both an unknown threat and a symbol of the migrant experience, marked by fear and uncertainty as they cross into unfamiliar spaces (Perfect, 2019, p.14). In Hamid's narrative, the doors become symbols of both a "beginning and an end" for the migrants who pass through them, highlighting the unpredictable nature of transnational movement within the technoscape (Hamid, 2018, p. 98).

The sudden appearance of migrants through these doors symbolizes the unpredictability of global flows, reflecting the fluidity and disruption that Appadurai associates with *technoscapes*. Just as technology and people can cross borders in unexpected and sometimes unsettling ways, the dark doors in *Exit West* embody the blurred boundaries that characterize the modern, globally connected world. Hamid's literary technique of shifting scenes and contrasting physical locations seamlessly illustrates how technology and global migration can link distant parts of the world into a single, interconnected network. These simultaneous events, as Perfect (2019) notes, embody the "black holes in the fabric of the nation," where conventional national boundaries dissolve, allowing individuals to cross into new territories regardless of cultural or geopolitical divisions (2019, p. 17).

In addition to this, Hamid's recurrent references to mobile phones underscore their role in creating a continuous, fluid technoscape that connects the characters across fragmented geographies. In contrast to Saeed, who limits his usage, Nadia "saw no need to limit her phone," using it to escape the confinement of her environment by virtually connecting with the wider world (Hamid, 2018, p. 37). Through social media, she not only witnesses distant events such as "bombs falling, women exercising, men copulating, clouds gathering" but also engages in local economies facilitated by digital platforms, such as when she orders hallucinogenic mushrooms for delivery, exploiting the gray areas in law enforcement's priorities (Hamid, 2018, pp. 37-38). Her use of "opaque usernames and avatars, the online equivalents of her black robes" mirrors her cultural identity, reflecting a digital anonymity that maintains her privacy while still enabling her to explore global spaces (Hamid, 2018, pp. 37-38). This depiction of Nadia's digital life highlights the multifaceted nature of technoscape, where mobile phones become more than mere tools of communication; they are portals for personal agency, cultural expression, and access to informal

economies. By presenting mobile connectivity as both a means of transcending geographic boundaries and as a culturally situated practice, Hamid illustrates how technoscape shapes identity and connection in complex ways, underscoring technology's role in facilitating both global interconnectedness and individual autonomy.

In the novel, financescapes become a tangible aspect of Nadia and Saeed's journey, illustrating how monetary exchanges reshape possibilities for migrants. Each new location they enter introduces fresh forms of economic engagement and survival strategies, revealing the multifaceted nature of *financescapes* in migratory contexts. The camp on Mykonos functions "like a trading post in an old-time gold rush," creating an emergent market system where nearly every conceivable good and service is available for sale or barter (Hamid, 2018, p. 101). From essentials such as "sweaters to mobile phones to antibiotics" to more covert services like "sex and drugs," this space operates outside the bounds of traditional economic systems, shaping a distinctive financescape that reflects the precarious existence of its inhabitants (Hamid, 2018, p. 101). These exchanges underscore the ways in which global migration patterns generate informal economies, often grounded in urgent need and vulnerability. In Mykonos, Nadia and Saeed must adapt to this makeshift economy, navigating a financescape that requires immediate, pragmatic choices. As they arrive, their primary objectives are survival and basic comfort, reflected in their first purchases: "some water, food, a blanket, a larger backpack, a little tent…electric power and local numbers for their phones" (Hamid, 2018, p. 102). This list of essentials demonstrates a strategic approach to their limited resources, where financial transactions are not only for sustenance but also for security and connectivity within a precarious environment.

However, the novel also illustrates a darker aspect of financescapes through the figures of people smugglers, who exploit the desperation of refugees like Saeed and Nadia. Saeed's encounter with an old acquaintance, a "people smuggler" who "knew all the ins and outs" of facilitating escape, at first seems a stroke of fortune, representing an avenue of support amid the turbulent *financescape* of displacement (Hamid, 2018, p. 109). This acquaintance, familiar with the covert systems of movement, initially offers assistance with a substantial discount, and Saeed's gratitude and trust are apparent as he believes this person will fulfill his promise of safe passage to Sweden. However, this trust is betrayed as Saeed and Nadia awaken the next day to find that the smuggler has "disappeared overnight" with their payment, leaving them stranded and vulnerable (Hamid, 2018, p. 109). The smuggler's abrupt abandonment exposes the precarious nature of financial exchanges within migratory contexts, where trust is often extended out of necessity despite the risks of exploitation. In this context, *financescapes* are not merely about the movement of money but encompass a web of exchanges, dependencies, and betrayals that define the refugee experience. The smuggler's deceptive practices highlight the unstable, often predatory nature of *financescapes* within displaced communities, where refugees must navigate informal networks and face potential exploitation at every turn. This darker aspect of financescapes in Exit West thus reflects Appadurai's notion of financial flows that are "mysterious, rapid, and difficult" to trace, particularly within the complex realities of migration, where financial exchanges intertwine with issues of survival, trust, and the pursuit of safety (Appadurai, 1996, p. 34).

The novel further highlights the economic triggers of migration. Economic pressures in their homeland prompt Nadia and Saeed to move abroad, a scenario that depicts Appadurai's concept of *financescapes*, where migration is often dictated by global economic forces and capital movements. Saeed's boss, with visible tears, is compelled to close his business due to the larger financial instability that possibly spans the entire economy. This moment highlights the precariousness of enterprises and the livelihoods of those they employ when faced with failing financial systems. The emotional distress of the boss and his employees' support in return underscores the deep impact of economic disturbances on everyone involved. At Nadia's office, the

situation is even more telling. The payroll department stops issuing paychecks, leading to the collapse of the normal economic order within the company. This cessation of financial flow forces employees to engage in "calm looting," where they take physical assets as a form of compensation, reflecting a breakdown in the usual financial practices (Hamid, 2018, p. 67). The fact that security guards are the first to leave indicates the disintegration of organizational structure when financial stability is lost.

Additionally, one of the micro-stories provides a profound exploration of Appadurai's *financescapes*, focusing on the impact of global financial trends on the lives and properties of individuals. The story features an old woman living in Palo Alto who has spent her entire life in the same house. The woman is now wealthy due to the value of her property, though she continues to live modestly, unlike her children, who urge her to sell the house for its monetary worth. She refuses, telling them to wait until after her death, a reminder of their financial motivations. In contrast, the flat owned by Saeed's family, initially a valuable piece of property, becomes almost worthless in the context of war (Hamid, 2018, p. 9).

This change in Saeed's family house illustrates how financescapes are not static; they fluctuate depending on the broader geopolitical situation. The estate agents' mantra, "location, location, location," and the historians' response, "geography is destiny," succinctly capture how the value of property is contingent on the stability of the environment (Hamid, 2018, p. 9). In times of peace, the flat's location would have been desirable, but in conflict, it becomes a liability, showing the fluidity of financial value in different scapes. Appadurai's *financescapes* encompass the flux and uncertainty in global capital, which affects everything from real estate to national economies. The old woman's house and Saeed's family's flat are subject to these larger, impersonal forces, demonstrating how individual properties are caught in the currents of global financial flows.

This juxtaposition aligns with Edward Said's concept of *imaginative geography*, which underscores how space and geography are not neutral or static but are shaped by cultural, historical, and political forces. Said asserts that "none of us is outside or beyond geography," emphasizing how geographical spaces are deeply tied to human struggles, not just through physical conflicts but through "ideas, forms, and images" (1981, p. 7). In *Exit West*, the shifting fortunes of the properties reflect this interplay between geography and broader socio-political dynamics. The woman's property, situated in a stable and affluent part of the world, benefits from global economic trends, whereas Saeed's flat, located in a war-torn area shaped by colonial legacies, becomes a liability. Said's observation that "the extraordinary global reach of classical nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century European imperialism still casts a considerable shadow over our own times" is particularly relevant here, as the colonial history of Saeed's city has left it vulnerable to geopolitical instability, directly impacting the value of its real estate (1981, p. 5).

Appadurai's concept of *mediascapes* refers to the global distribution and impact of media technologies like television, films, and the internet, which allow a wide range of groups to share and shape information worldwide (1996, p. 35). Hamid's *Exit West* encapsulates Appadurai's concept of *mediascapes* by illustrating the transformative impact of mobile technology on individual experience and societal connectivity. Nadia and Saeed's engagement with their phones serves as a microcosm of how media technologies connect people to a vast array of global and imaginary spaces, influencing their perceptions and interactions with both the local and global:

> In their phones were antennas, and these antennas sniffed out an invisible world as if by magic, a world that was all around them and also nowhere, transporting them to places distant and near and to places that had never been and would never be. (Hamid, 2018, p. 35)

In the text, the description of phones as magical devices that reveal an "invisible world" aligns with

Appadurai's idea that *mediascapes* allow people to access and imagine different realities and lives. This gateway opens not only to other locations but also to potential existences that may never be actualized, created by the international flow of media visuals and narratives. Saeed's cautious engagement with his phone, where he limits his app usage but still delves into the internet for a regulated hour each day, shows the compelling allure of the *mediascape*. Despite his reservations about the overwhelming nature of digital content, he finds it indispensable for maintaining a connection with Nadia. This reflects Appadurai's idea that *mediascapes* are not just about the consumption of media but are deeply interwoven into the fabric of daily life, influencing personal relationships and individual behavior.

Nadia's use of her phone contrasts with Saeed's, as she embraces its full potential to connect with the wider world (Hamid, 2018, p. 39). Her experiences browsing social media and ordering items like shrooms for delivery demonstrate how mediascapes can facilitate new forms of consumption and interaction. Her phone acts as a portal to global events and personal adventures, illustrating the dual role of *mediascapes* in providing access to both global imagery and localized services. In public, Nadia wears black robes and extends this principle online with opaque usernames and avatars, showing how people can use and adjust *mediascapes* to keep their privacy or develop new personas. This ability to shape one's presence in both physical and digital realms highlights the transformative power of mediascapes, as described by Appadurai.

Nadia and Saeed's home city's physical realities align closely with Appadurai's concept of *mediascapes*:

> But even now, the city's freewheeling virtual world stood in stark contrast to the day-to-day lives of most people, to those of young men, and especially of young women, and above all of children who went to sleep unfed but could see on some small screen people in foreign lands preparing and consuming and even conducting food fights with feasts of such opulence that the very fact of their existence boggled the mind. (Hamid, 2018, pp. 38-9)

The story sets the virtual world, filled with images of luxury and freedom, against the stark and sometimes brutal urban life, illustrating Appadurai's concept of *mediascapes* as zones where reality and fiction merge. This fusion prompts individuals, particularly those far from urban centers, to create imagined lives shaped by media (Appadurai, 1996, p. 35). Moreover, this passage exemplifies what Spivak describes as the continuation of colonial processes "under the rubric of 'globalization'"(Spivak, as cited in Capoor, 2004, p. 633). The digital realm's presentation of Western abundance to undernourished viewers mirrors historical colonial exhibitions of wealth, reinforcing global socioeconomic disparities while naturalizing them through constant media exposure. Nadia's contrasting experiences online and in physical space further illuminate this dynamic. Her digital freedom to order items and browse social media exists alongside street-level harassment for riding a motorcycle (Hamid, 2018, p. 39). This juxtaposition reflects what Spivak identifies as the particular burden borne by subaltern women in global systems of production and social control (cited in Kapoor, p. 633). The virtual world's promise of liberation collides with entrenched local patriarchal structures, themselves shaped by colonial histories.

Furthermore, the pirate radio station operated by militants adds another layer to the mediascapes in the story. Various media entities in the novel, including local and international channels and the militants' pirate radio, narrate different versions of the same situation, highlighting the mediascape as an intricate network of image-centric, narrative-driven accounts that influence the reality experienced by their viewers:

> The few remaining local channels still on the air were saying that the war was going well, but the international ones were saying that it was going badly indeed, adding to an unprecedented flow of migrants that was hitting the rich countries, who were building walls

> and fences and strengthening their borders, but seemingly to unsatisfactory effect. The militants had their own pirate radio station [...] claimed in a decelerated but almost rap-like cadence that the fall of the city was imminent. (Hamid, 2018, pp. 70-1)

Firstly, the local channels, which portray the war as progressing favorably, likely reflect the interests of state or local powers who wish to maintain control or foster a sense of security among the populace. This aligns with Appadurai's observation that mediascapes can be influenced by the "interests of those who own and control them" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 35). In contrast, the international channels depict the situation as deteriorating, potentially aligning with global perspectives that emphasize the severity of the conflict and its broader implications, such as the refugee crisis affecting wealthier nations. This juxtaposition of narratives highlights how mediascapes can offer "large and complex repertoires of images, narratives, and ethnoscapes," which are profoundly mixed (Appadurai, 1996, p. 35). For Saeed and Nadia, the mediascape they navigate is a mosaic of conflicting realities, each vying for their belief and shaping their perceptions of the world outside. The different narratives create a sense of vagueness, making it difficult for them to discern the true state of affairs. The ambiguity in the information leads people to build their perceptions of the world from these disjointed pieces, reflecting Appadurai's theory that *mediascapes* offer scripts for audiences to craft imagined worlds described as "chimerical and disjointed" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 35).

Exit West can be connected to Appadurai's concept of *ideoscapes* in several ways, particularly in how the control and manipulation of communication channels reflect the flow and restriction of political ideas and ideologies. In their home city where Nadia and Saeed first live, weak government military efforts are failing to curb the terrorist and military actions of religious extremist groups called 'the militants,' who are gradually occupying more of the country and will ultimately govern all significant urban centers. These militants, also supported by foreign powers, enforce a reign of terror, executing anyone who opposes their views on religion, societal behavior, and gender relations and violently instituting a theocratic government. The government, in response to ongoing threats, has shut down mobile phone signals and internet connectivity in a city as an antiterrorism measure (Hamid, 2018, p.55). In the story, the government's decision to shut down mobile phone signals, internet connectivity, and other communication channels is a direct form of controlling the *ideoscapes*. By cutting off these channels, the government is limiting the spread of ideas, information, and communication that could challenge its power or spread counter-narratives. This aligns with Appadurai's observation that ideoscapes are often about the struggle between state ideologies and counter-ideologies. The shutdown of communication represents more than just a tactical move; it symbolizes a broader attempt to manipulate the ideoscape within the city. Appadurai notes that the elements of *ideoscapes*, such as freedom, rights, and democracy, are subject to reinterpretation and control as they spread globally. Here, the government's justification of the shutdown as an "antiterrorism measure" illustrates this manipulation, as the rhetoric of security is used to legitimize the restriction of communication, thereby controlling the ideoscape and limiting access to information that might challenge the state's authority.

The act of cutting off mobile and internet access leaves characters like Nadia and Saeed feeling "marooned and alone and much more afraid," highlighting the emotional and psychological impact of a restricted ideoscape (Hamid, 2018, p. 55). Appadurai argues that the spread of ideoscapes is closely tied to the creation of a public sphere where ideas can be exchanged and contested (1996, p. 36). By depriving Nadia, Saeed, and others of their "portals to each other and to the world provided by their mobile phones," the government is effectively dismantling this public sphere, isolating individuals and increasing their fear (Hamid, 2018, p. 55). The manipulation of the *ideoscapes* demonstrates how states can use their control over communication technologies to

shape not only political narratives but also the emotional and psychological state of the population, reinforcing Appadurai's concept of *ideoscapes* as powerful tools in the hands of those who control them. By severing the connections between individuals and the broader world of ideas, the government in *Exit West* is exercising control over the ideoscape in a manner that is both immediate and far-reaching.

Conclusion

In *Exit West*, Mohsin Hamid portrays the contemporary conditions in countries affected by military interventions, which trigger mass migration from the region to the West. Through the depiction of an unnamed city, Hamid captures the political, social, economic, and cultural decline brought about by an influx of refugees and subsequent military actions against fundamentalist groups. Postcolonial scholars often argue that globalization perpetuates many of the dynamics that characterize colonialism. While European powers once exerted direct control over their colonies, today's control is maintained through supranational corporations, international treaties, and global economic systems. Globalization, from a postcolonial perspective, is not a neutral or purely economic process but one deeply entwined with historical patterns of exploitation, domination, and inequality. The continuation of these dynamics under the guise of global economic integration challenges the idea that globalization is a force for progress, revealing instead its role in perpetuating the legacies of imperialism in the modern world.

When analyzed through Appadurai's five scapes, this journey reflects the broader dynamics of global flows. The magical doors serve as metaphors for ethnoscapes, illustrating the fluidity of migration and the tensions it creates between old and new identities. The magical doors encapsulate the paradox of modern migration: they facilitate movement and new opportunities, yet they intensify the struggle for cultural belonging in a globalized world. As symbols of *ethnoscapes*, these doors underscore the fluidity of identity, revealing how migrants are caught between established and emergent selves in unfamiliar social landscapes. For Saeed, the doors heighten his attachment to traditional values, while for Nadia, they open pathways to new freedoms and identities. Through these doors, Hamid highlights the ambivalence of globalization, where the promise of movement is entangled with the complexities of adapting across fragmented cultural spaces, ultimately capturing the layered reality of the contemporary migrant experience.

As refugees navigate these new environments, *technoscapes* and *mediascapes* play crucial roles, with globalized technologies and media shaping perceptions of migration, belonging, and exclusion. *Finanscapes*, particularly in cosmopolitan cities, underscore the economic struggles of displaced individuals who must find ways to survive in unfamiliar, often hostile, territories. Finally, ideoscapes highlight the clash between traditional values, as embodied by Saeed, and the progressive, cosmopolitan identity that Nadia adopts. Appadurai's five-scapes framework thus provides a nuanced understanding of how global processes influence the evolution of refugee identities and their capacity to adapt to new territories shaped by both inclusion and exclusion. Appadurai's work provides a lens for understanding the chaotic and interconnected nature of the modern globalized world. His "scapes" highlight the multiple dimensions through which globalization operates, encompassing technology, finance, media, culture, and power. This framework helps us move beyond simplistic understandings of globalization as a one-way flow from powerful nations to weaker ones, instead showing how global and local forces constantly interact and reshape each other. These interactions are complex and unpredictable, making it necessary to think in more nuanced ways about the consequences of living in a globalized world.

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