



**MAGICAL REALISM AS A POLITICS OF DETERRITORIALIZATION
IN MOHSIN HAMID'S *EXIT WEST***

THESIS

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**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS JEMBER**

2023



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Submitted to the English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Jember
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Sarjana Sastra in English
Studies.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved parents Sugiri and Hidayati for their constant love and support, my friends in English Department Universitas Jember academic year of 2016, and everyone involved in my college journey up to this moment that I cannot mention once at a time.



MOTTO

“You might be alone at the moment... But someday... You'll definitely find
nakama! No one is born in this world to be alone!”

— Eiichiro Oda



DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled “**Magical Realism as A Politics of Deterritorialization in Mohsin Hamid’s *Exit West***” is a genuine writing. I state that the research described in this thesis has never been submitted for any other degree or publications. I clarify to the best of my knowledge that all sources applied and any assist received in the making of this thesis have all been acknowledged.

Jember, June 2023

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SUMMARY

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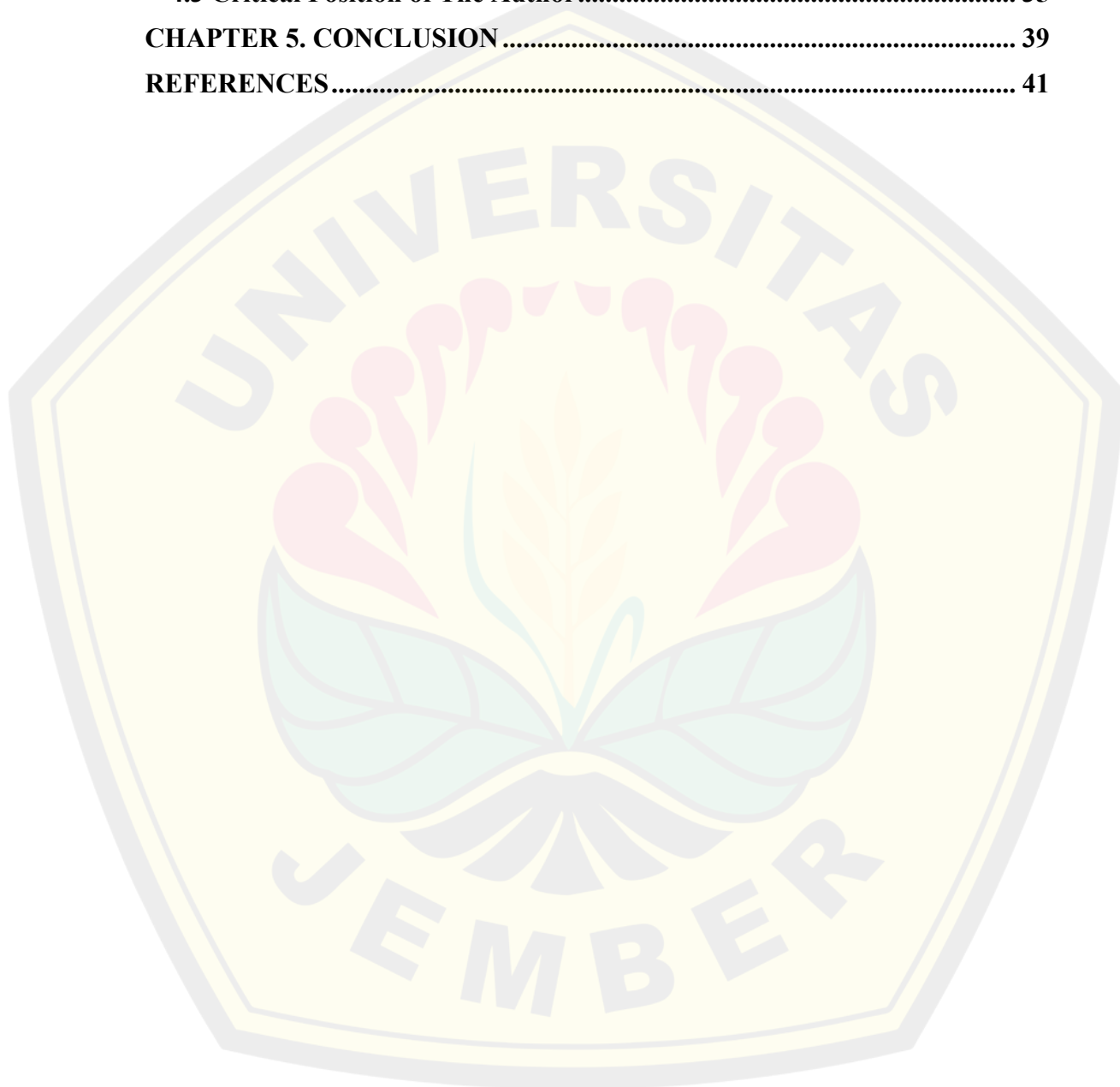
Exit West is a novel written by Mohsin Hamid and first published in 2017. The story revolves around the refugee problem faced by the main characters due to the civil war happened in main characters town refers as unknown city. The conflict forced the main characters to decide on an escape plan in order to reach a safer place with the help of the supernatural door which has the ability to teleport people into the far different places around the world. Given its characteristic of magic and realistic setting, thus this research applies Faris' key elements of magical realism in the novel in order to break down the deterritorialization that is expected to be one of the major issues happened in the novel. Deterritorialization in the novel is shown when the main characters cultural practice is not in accordance with the territory from which they depart from their home land. In other word their behavior as a cultural practice is no longer tied within the territory itself.

In order to get the profound analysis, this research uses the method of qualitative research, means that the data collected and processed are in the form of words, sentences, and dialogue served in the novel as the primary data, and the other literary form as the secondary data in order to support the hypothesis related with the historical event behind the creation of the novel. To prevent the topic to be out from the line, this research is divided into two major questions. The first question deals with how the deterritorialization constructed in the novel, the second is what the critical position of the author in order to get the ideological interest behind the creation of the novel.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of some sub-chapters. The first sub-chapter is background of study which explains deterritorialization as the topic discussion and exploring the novel *Exit West*. The explanation is followed by revealing the topic of discussion, research questions and the goal of study.

1.1 Background of Study

Deterritorialization is a separation of social, cultural, and political practices from the local territory. A certain attribute of identity is no longer tied between the local culture and its place. It emerges the erasure of the cultural subject and object from a certain region, a force that transcends territorial boundaries (Eko, 2015). The term deterritorialization is originally derived from Deleuze and Guattari concept as cited in Elden which says “the term is one of the relations between thought and territorial placing, between internal and external exile, and bears relation to notion of nomad thought, hybridity and diaspora” (Elden, 2005).

In the globalization era especially in digital communication technology, the spread of deterritorialization drives rapidly, for it makes any global boundaries become abolished. In globalization studies, deterritorialization refers to interconnection of nation worldwide in mixing cultural product from the western world to the periphery of the global system (Eko, 2015). Therefore, we find that deterritorialization is the cultural process as in the age of globalization, where cultural boundaries and formation have been displaced and reconfigured and people feel that they belong to another community around the globe, despite they do not share their common territory with the other members (Papastergiadis, 2000:115). Giddens as cited in Păun marks that globalization creates the social relationship worldwide that links distant localities in which local events are shaped by the other events occurring many miles away (Păun, 2009).

In the novel deterritorialization is portrayed by the main female character Nadia who always wears a black robe which identifies a certain culture in a certain region. She gives an offer that a woman who wears the “black robe” has nothing to do with a certain belief as we know the author of the novel is from Pakistan.

Pakistan has an identity that the “black robe” in the novel is the attire which refers to Muslim community. Almost all people of Pakistan are Muslims, and Islamic ideals and practices pervade almost all parts of Pakistani Life (Ziring, 2020). The veil has become one of the most contested and symbolic motifs in western imagery of the east and Islam (Wagner *et al.*, 2012). Niqab is considered as Islamic dress and artefact, and it is the Arabic term for face veils covering women’s hair, neck, shoulder, except two eyes are visible (Chowdhury *et al.*, 2017). It is proved by Saeed’s circumspection towards Nadia’s conservative appearance even though the author does not explicitly mention what kind of dress actually worn by Nadia, and the narrator simply refers it as “black robe”. In the novel, Nadia does not want to take off her black robe when she visits Mykonos, London, and California through supernatural door. Saeed as a main male character asks Nadia why she always wears black robe even though they are not in their home land anymore. According to Deleuze and Guattari concept of deterritorialization as cited in Veyret conveys that it is the line of flight which produce ruptures, leading, in their turn, to new stratifications and proliferations, and the delineation of the potentiality for a form of escape from norms and limits, a tension towards the realization of other aesthetic spaces (Veyret, 2018). From this event there’s a separation of cultural identity from the local territory. It is supported by the appearance of the magical door in the novel. The door has an ability to send Nadia and Saeed to different palaces around the world. It represents our digitalization era in which nowadays boundaries from all over the world are vanished due to the emergence of the internet. Vatarnova as cited in Zassoursky marks that today’s digital communication creates a new degree of openness which leads to qualitative changes in societal development including means and mode of production in all human activity (Zassoursky, 2002). It is also supported by the quotation in the novel that Hamid says we are all migrants through time (Hamid, 2017:113).

Based on the situation above the novel can be categorized as magic-genre-realism. Faris said that magical realism combines realism and the fantastic, obscuring between the ordinary phenomena and fantastical thing to make it difficult

to define whether it is real or not (Faris, 2004:1). Magical realism has modified the dominant mode of realism in western culture and challenging the basis of representation from within. Therefore, it gives a chance for the marginal voices, submerged tradition and created masterpiece of literary work especially in postcolonial culture (Faris, 2004:1).

Associated with this issue, there are some authors writing literary works using magical realism style. One of them is Mohsin Hamid who writes the literary work entitled *Exit West*. The novel is a political fiction first published on February 27th, 2017 by Hamish Hamilton (UK) and Riverhead Books (US). It is his latest novel. He released his first novel entitled *Moth Smoke* on 2000, the second novel entitled *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* was released on March 1st 2007, and the third novel entitled *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* was released on February 27th 2013. And the fourth novel entitled *Discontent and Its Civilisations: Despatches from Lahore, New York & London* was released on 2014.

Mohsin Hamid is the author of numerous of bestselling novels including *Exit West* which the book was named by *The New York Times* as one of the 10 Best Books of 2017. Mohsin Hamid is a Pakistani British novelist, writer and brand consultant. Hamid spent part of his childhood in the United States, where he stayed from the age of 3 to 9 while his father, a university professor, was enrolled in a PhD program at Stanford University. He then moved with his family back to Lahore, Pakistan, and attended the Lahore American School. These formed the backdrop of all his book that talks about America.

As has been mentioned before, *Exit West* was first released in February 2017 in UK and US. In the same year this novel received the 2017 Booker Prize longlist among twelve others, and on 13 September 2017 was announced as one of the six-strong shortlist. In December 2017, former U.S. President Barack Obama included *Exit West* in his list of best books he read in 2017.

Exit West takes setting in Mykonos, London, and California. The story tells about two young people, Nadia and Saeed, both students, who fall in love with each other in an unnamed city, which is “swollen with refugees” but “not yet openly at war.” Despite their different worldviews (Saeed is from a conservative and

traditional family, but Nadia is secular and lives alone), their blooming romance eventually leads them to take the decision on escape plan, as tensions escalate and radical militants take over the city. They hear about magical door that can take people to distant different places around the world, and thus their journey begins. Nadia and Saeed find themselves on the Greek island of Mykonos, London, and then California, respectively. However, their relationship breaks down and they finally go their separate ways.

I found an interesting issue in the novel that Nadia as the main female character who always wears black robe has a behavior that is not in accordance with the construction in the real realm about what women should do when they wear a black robe. As I have mentioned above, deterritorialization is a separation of cultural, political, and social practices from the local territory. It is portrayed by Nadia who always wears her black robe when she forced to flee the city of her birth due to the civil war. What I am focusing in this research is discovering the five key elements of magical realism in the novel as well as its function in deterritorializing the main characters cultural practices in order to identify the relation between the deterritorialization in the novel with the social context as the background of the creation of the novel.

Based on the explanation above, I intend to dismantle the deterritorialization in the novel using Wendy B. Faris' Magical Realism that is considered as the obvious device to analyse the problem.

1.2 Topic of Discussion

Topic of discussion is one of important aspects in doing a research. We can do the research if we know our topic discussion. What to be the main focus of this research is how deterritorialization offered in the novel *Exit West*, and the ideological context behind the creation of the novel.

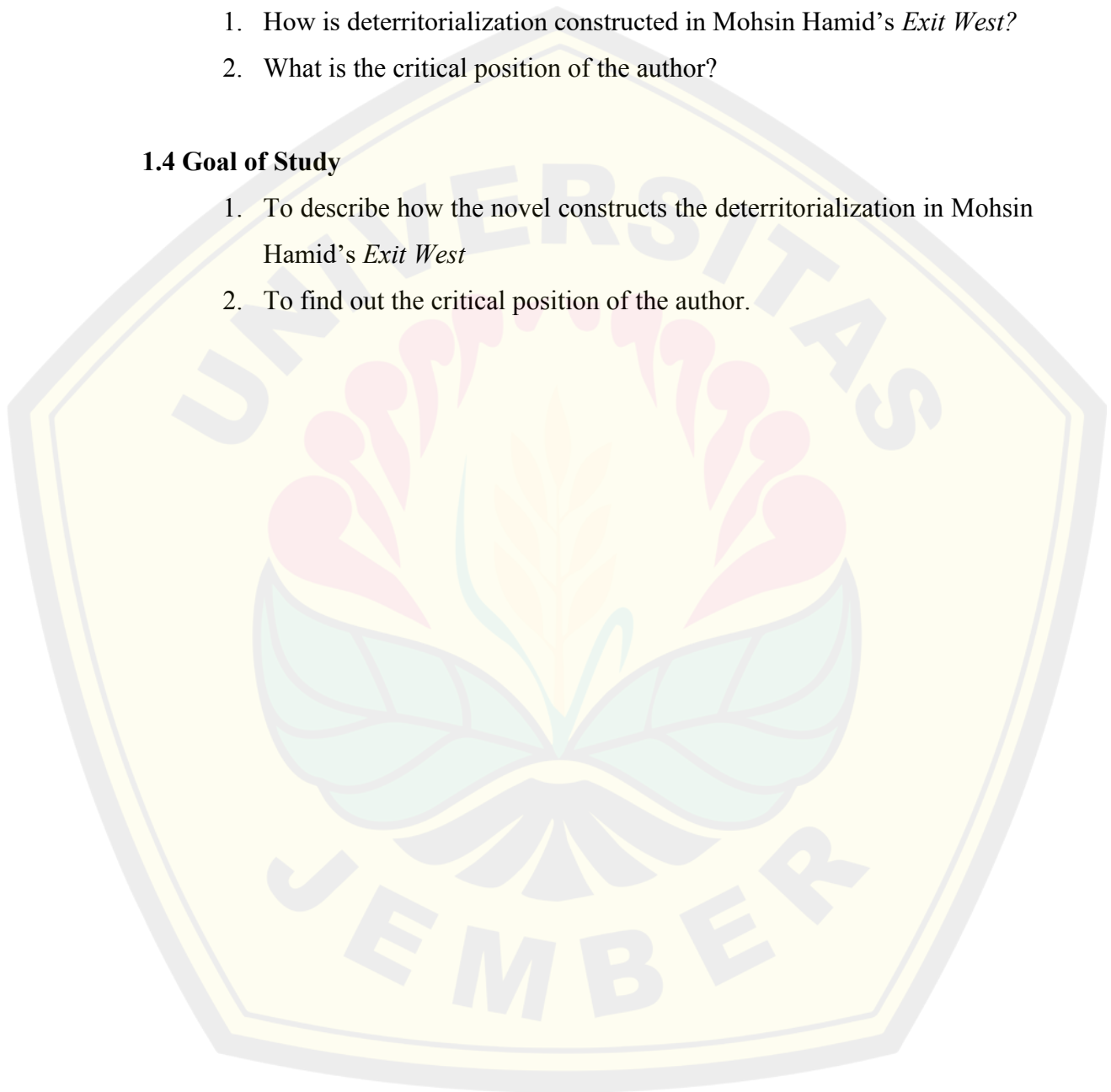
1.3 Research Questions

Using Wendy B. Faris' magical realism, this research focuses on five key elements of magical realism as well as its relation with the deterritorialization in the novel, thus in order to disclose the ideological interest behind the creation of the novel I will analyse the problems into two main questions below:

1. How is deterritorialization constructed in Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*?
2. What is the critical position of the author?

1.4 Goal of Study

1. To describe how the novel constructs the deterritorialization in Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*
2. To find out the critical position of the author.



CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains two sub-chapters. The first sub-chapter is explaining the previous researches used to enrich my understanding about the theory and find the gap between the previous researches and this thesis. The next sub-chapters are exploring the explanation about Wendy B. Faris' magical realism and postcolonial study used to analyse the topic discussion in the novel.

2.1 Previous Researches

Previous research is an important aspect in doing a research. It helps us to enrich our references about the topic discussion in order to solve a problem in a research. Through previous research, we also know the gap of our research from the other research. I use two previous researches in my thesis; the first previous research is an article written by Mahmudah entitled "Magical Realism in Ahmad Sa'dāwiy's *Frankenstein fī Bagdād*" (2016). The second is article entitled "Masculine Female and Feminine Male: A Study of Gender Slippage Amid Migration Spaces in Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*" (2020) written by Wahla, Mahin & Asif, Saiqa.

In the first previous research, Mahmudah's research focuses on the magical realism elements in the novel that emerges from the postcolonial situation in which the novel takes place in the period of inter-ethnic conflict arose after the invasion of America in Iraq due to the allegation of United States president towards Iraq president in developing biological weapon in 2003. And the belief of Iraq people, horoscope practice, and magic, in mystical and illogical atmosphere.

I found that Mahmudah's research and my research are similar in which our research is related with magical realism in the novel from the global east region. Mahmudah uses Wendy B. Faris's magical realism approach. It helps me to apply the magical realism approach to examine the magical realism elements mapped in my object material. However, her research is different with my research, since her research focuses on five key elements of magical realism while my research focuses on magical realism as a tool of politic in delineating deterritorialization through magical realism narrative.

The second previous research, Wahla, Mahin & Asif, Saiqa's journal focuses on gender identity served in *Exit West*. They use Butler's queer theory to explore the gender role portrayed by the main character in the novel, and they concluded that Nadia as the main female character tend to produce alternative discourse of resistance against male-dominant culture in her native land by preferring her queer orientation over normative rule of femininity. The main female character's act in the novel indicates the masculinity, and it exposes constraints of dominant ideology in Nadia's land of birth. Wahla, Mahin & Asif, Saiqa suggest that *Exit West* is built through the gender slippage. I found that our object material is similar, yet their research focuses on gender identity while my research focus on deterritorialization in the novel. However, this article is useful to help me identify the identity brought by the main characters, for it gives the example of the cultural identity in *Exit West* in which the novel is the object material of my research.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Magical Realism is a style of fiction in the postcolonial cultures in which magical elements and mundane object are collided in a text. Magical realism combines realism and the fantastic so that the marvelous seems to grow organically within the ordinary, obscuring the distinction between them. Furthermore, that combination of realistic and fantastical narrative, together with the inclusion of different cultural traditions, means that magical realism reflects, in both its narrative mode and its cultural environment, the hybrid nature of much postcolonial society (Faris, 2004:1). In approaching this style of fiction, there are five primary characteristics of magical realism to be fulfilled. First, is the existence of the irreducible elements of magic, second is the detailed presence of the phenomenal world, third is the experience of unsettling doubts by readers, fourth is the narrative merges contradictory different realms, fifth is the disruptions of time, space, and identity. (Faris, 2004:7)

2.2.1 Irreducible Elements of Magic

The “irreducible element” is something that cannot be identified according to the laws of the universe as they have been formulated in Western empirically based discourse, that is, according to “logic, familiar knowledge, or received belief,” as David Young and Keith Hollaman describe it. Therefore, the reader has difficulty to prove evidence to settle questions about the status of events and characters in such fictions (Faris, 2004:7). In Yann Martel’s *Life of Pi* (2001) for example, shows the extraordinary event in which the main character arrived in a bizzare forest that transform into a vast living creature when the night comes. Such phenomenon cannot be verified by empirical perception. The phenomenon is not articulated or integrated into everyday reality in other narrative such as mythical, religious, folkloric.

2.2.2 The Phenomenal World

The phenomenal world is the mundane substance in magical realism, distinguishing it from much fantasy and allegory. It appears in several ways. Realistic descriptions create a fictional world that resembles the one we live in, often by the strong presence of realistic setting. On one hand, this attention to sensory detail of realistic matter continues and renews the realistic tradition (Faris, 2004:14). For example, in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), Remedios the Beauty’s levitation starts quite concretely, when Fernanda as she hanging out the laundry feels a delicate wind of light pull the sheets out of her hand and open them up wide. In *Midnight’s Children* (1981), Rushdie situates his narrative in the surrounding of India’s independence. Grenouille in *Perfume* (1985), with his powerful sense of smell, is born in Paris (Faris, 2004:15). Those are the phenomenal world in magical realism. The wind that pulls the sheets from Fernanda’s hand is an ordinary phenomenon that can be seen in our everyday life, or India and Paris is a place that are truly existed in our world. It can be proven empirically through a world map.

2.2.3 Unsettling Doubt

The reader may hesitate between two contradictory understandings of events, and hence experience some unsettling doubts. The question of belief is central here, this hesitation frequently arises from the implicit clash of cultural system within the narrative, which moves toward belief in extrasensory phenomena but narrates from the post-Enlightenment perspective and in the realistic mode that traditionally exclude them (Faris, 2004:17). The hesitation depends on cultural background of the reader. Some reader in some culture may experience less hesitation than others. It depends on their beliefs (Faris, 2004:17). Western people for example, may feel more doubtful rather than non-western people when facing this mode of writing, for rationality dominates their culture.

2.2.4 Merging Realms

It happens when we experience the closeness or near-merging of two realms, two worlds. The fluctuation and uncertain nature of the narrator's metamorphosis into a sow in Marie Darrieussecq's *Pig Tales* (2003) means that there is no boundaries between two contradictory worlds. The narrator herself is captive between two worlds, the human and the animal, not belonging really to one or the other (Faris, 2004:21). This triggers a confrontation between the natural law and the supernatural norms. Magical realism sometimes emerges the traditional culture of the colonized and the modern world of the colonizer in its narrative. Ontologically it integrates the magical and mundane material, but it is not really integrated. As a result, it creates liminal world.

2.2.5 Disruptions of Time, Space, and Identity

Finally, in addition to merging different worlds, these fictions disturb received ideas about time, space, and identity. With "four years, eleven months, and two days" of rain, an insomnia plague that erases the past and the meaning of words, and a room where it is "always March and always Monday" is a disruption of time in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (Faris, 2004:23). Our received knowledge of space is perplexed by the event of the tropical plants that grow over automobile

club's pool in Paris in Carlos Fuentes's *Distant Relation* (1980) when Cortázar's axolotl and his observer seem to change places on either side of the glass in aquarium, or Grenouille smells virgins across town in *Perfume*. We can also find the confusion of the identity which is delineated by Saleem in *Midnight's Children* who questions about himself "Who what am I? My answer: I am the sum total of everything that went before me, of all I have been seen done, of everything done-to-me. I am everyone everything whose being-in-the-world affected was affected by mine. I am anything that happens after I've gone which would not have happened if I had not come. Nor am I particularly exceptional in this matter; each 'I,' every one of the now-six-hundred-million-plus of us, contains a similar multitude. I repeat for the last time: to understand me, you'll have to swallow a world." This narration confuses the identity of the realistically character of "I", therefore it questions the reader who actually the character "I" is (Faris, 2004:25).

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The third chapter discusses research methodology used to analyze the research problem. Some steps mentioned are the proper ways of data processing. It consists of three subchapters. The first subchapter is the type of research, the second is the data collection. The last subchapter is data processing and data analysis utilized to explain how the data are categorized and analyzed. The aim of this chapter is to help the reader to understand the way I do my research.

3.1 Type of Research

This research is qualitative research since the chosen object material of this research is novel. This research concerns with verbal description such as quotation and sentences in the form of narratives. The data are collected in the form of words, sentences, and paragraphs related to the research questions. Jackson *et al.* (2007) describes that there are several textual analysis that could be classified into qualitative research such as content analysis, discourse analysis, conversation analysis, and one them is narrative analysis. Riessman as cited in Jackosn *et al.* (2007) conveys that in conducting narrative analysis, “the researcher examines how a story is developed, organized, begins and ends, as well as, its goals or aims.” As a result, qualitative research is applied.

3.2 Data Collection

In this research, I collect the data through document research. It means that the data are gathered by reading books, news, articles, or any literary sources in every places through online or offline activity dealing with thesis, chosen theory, and other books to support the analysis. Bowen (2009) describes that document research is a kind of analysis of evaluating data both printed or digital-based in the form of word and images that have been recorded without being intervened by the researcher.

The data are divided into two types: primary and secondary data. The primary data are collected from *Exit west* novel by Mohsin Hamid. The primary data of this analysis are all information and facts related to the issue of

detrterritorialization portrayed by Main characters behavior and surrounding in the novel. The secondary data are taken from any kind of books, articles, journals or internet related with postcolonial studies and magical realism as postcolonial discourse. The use of secondary data is to strengthen the analysis process.

3.3 Data Processing and Data Analysis

Data processing is how I process the data. It is conducted by categorizing the primary and secondary data based on the topic that I am going to research. Wong (2008) defines that data analysis in qualitative research is the act of arranging and categorizing the collected data in order to increase the understanding towards the phenomenon that is being analyzed. Afterward, I choose whether the data are required or not. If the data are not considered necessary, I will remove it.

My first step is reading the novel for several times in order to get the profound understanding about the topic that I am going to discuss. I need to read the novel repeatedly so that it helps me to choose the accurate data served in the novel. The next step is obtaining the primary data and categorized it. I categorize them into five key elements of magical realism based on Faris' theory of magical realism. The characteristics are actually not separately served but intertwined with each other in the narrative. The data are taken from Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* which is related to the magical realism. The second data are taken from journals, articles and any internet sources dealing with the historical context of the novel, and books as a supporting information.

After collecting the data, I begin the analysis by applying Faris' five keys elements of magical realism. The first analysis starts with the mapping of these elements of magical realism in the novel. The data is the existence of the magical door that can teleport people into different places around the world. The second one is the data that related with detrterritorialization issue. Nadia as the main female character never put off her "black robe" as I assume that "black robe" is a part of cultural identity referring a certain belief in a certain region especially in Muslim majority countries. Nadia also has multivocal gender identity shown by the narrator that Nadia has same-sex sexual desire. The next data is the discrepancy between the

main characters behavior with the local territory. It shows that although the main characters belongs to Muslim community, they also carry out liberal behavior such as having sexual intercourse outside marriage and consuming addictive substances such as marijuana and psychedelic mushroom.

The next step is describing the social context as the background of the creation of the novel. This analysis delas with two questions. The first question related to the construction deterritorialization within magical realism in the novel, the second is relating to the the critical position of the author. This analysis is conducted to dissect the construction of deterritorialization in the novel in which the purpose is to reveal author's position in order to expose what is his intention related to deterritorialization in the novel. Thus, this research is supposed to interpret the ideological position of the author through the narrative in the text. However, this research hopefully can be a reference for the other researcher in doing magical realism study.

CHAPTER 4. DISCUSSION

The term magical realism is first coined by German art critique Franz Roh in the early twentieth century to identify the new of the art style in German painting called *New Objectivity*, then applied to Latin American fiction, make it perhaps the most important contemporary trend in international fiction (Faris, 2004:1). Magical realism is considered to be the most important aspect in literary style of fiction, because it gives a chance for the neglected voice from the marginal society especially in ex-colonized countries to challenge the dominant discourse which possesses the western-empirically based knowledge in the ex-colonized regions. Magical realism fiction consists of supernatural phenomena that the western culture is difficult to accept, for rationality dominates its culture. The phenomena cannot be proven scientifically, and it seems to grow naturally in a text as it is. Faris (2004:1) states that the combination of the mundane phenomena and the supernatural phenomena creates the hybrid culture of the western as the colonizer and the colonized culture, therefore this fiction echoes in much of postcolonial society. Magical realism influences in both western and the east, hence it becomes a part of postcolonialism and postmodernism perception.

In approaching this style of fiction, Faris suggests that the novel should have five primary characteristics of magical realism. It consists of the irreducible elements of magic that cannot be verified through human empirically-based knowledge, the phenomenal world that is mundane matters which could be perceived and identified in our everyday-life reality, unsettling doubt which makes the readers confused to decide whether the events are real or not, merging realms that creates the liminal world in the text, so the readers experience that they are in between atmosphere, and disruption of time, space, and identity which is obscuring the given idea of time, space, and identity principles. These characteristics are not clearly separated between each other, but rather intertwined in the text. The primary data related to magical events and the appearance of phenomenal world will lead to the idea of merging realm universe, the state in which the reality and the fantastical one is not actually merged, but creates a hybrid world which evokes the feeling towards the readers in deciding whether the text is the real one or just a fantastical

thing. Later on, these events conduct the attempt to grasp the potency of the antithetical politics to destabilize the western dominant discourse regarding the received idea of the time, space, and identity from the modern principles.

This chapter tends to explore the five key elements of magical realism in the novel with the relation of the social context as the background of the issue related to creation of the novel. By finding the primary data in the form of words, phrases, sentences, and quotes in the novel, the data which had been collected will be connected with the secondary data such as books, journals, articles related with the issue in the novel to support the idea in seeking the ideology and the political interest behind the creation of the novel.

To begin my investigation, I decide to divide the discussion into some sub chapters in order to find the goal of study in this research. The first subchapter will expose the five key elements of magical realism in the novel as well as its relation with the social circumstances as the background of the novel. After finding the relation of the mode with the contextual condition, the result is expected to provide the map in dismantling the construction of deterritorialization in the novel as I explain in the second sub chapter that afterwards of the discussion, the result is expected to help me identify the ideology and the political interest to disclose the critical position of the author in the third subchapter.

4.1 Magical Realism in Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*

In approaching this style of fiction Faris suggests that the novel should consist five key elements that I am going to analyze below.

4.1.1 Irreducible Elements of Magic

As I have explained above, the irreducible elements of magic is the data related to magical events found in the novel. The events are something which cannot be explained by our rational perception, because it is beyond our understanding of the law of measurement acceptance. According to Faris (2004:7) states that the data is something that cannot be examined based on the western-empirically based knowledge according to received idea of the law of the universe. The data that could

be categorized as magical thing in my object material is the appearance of the magical door guarded by the militant. The door have the ability to teleport people to cross the national border instantly, because people including Saeed and Nadia as the main characters use it to travel across the globe in order to escape and to find a safer place due to the collapse of the main characters' homeland caused by the civil war. The war arose was a result of identity conflict which is expected to take place in the Middle-East region based on the identity served by the main characters' surrounding and appearance such as the black robe worn by Nadia that signifies a certain confidence, or Saeed's beard along with his attitude narrated in the story (Hamid, 2017)

The identity conflict in middle-east countries has become the major issue from long ago. Kumaraswamy (2006) states that more than three-quarters of century most of the middle-east countries suffer from the national identity problem due to the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire following the fall down of the Empire in the World War I, resulting in the occupation of the middle-east countries by the Allied Powers in which most of them came out from. Hence the identity conflict is inevitable as a result of the western political, cultural and social practices influence towards middle-east countries.

“The night the militants came they were looking for people of a particular sect, and demanded to see ID cards, to check what sort of names everyone had, but fortunately for Saeed's father and Saeed and Nadia their names were not associated with the denomination being hunted.”

(Hamid, 2017:49).

From the quotation above there is an identity conflict between the militants and civilians. The mere name of a person could indicate someone's identity, and it could identify that whether or not a person is involved in a particular organization or a certain faith. The conflict happened in the novel has caused serious damage across the city including Nadia and Saeed's residential flats. When militant groups have almost taken control throughout the entire city, water, electricity as well as food supplies were increasingly limited, and refugees had filled the city's streets. Nadia and Saeed finally had no other choice but to flee their city through a shortcut

offered by an agent by going through the door at the promised rendezvous. All residents in the city have been forced to flee their homes and they are scrambling to try to reach a door that can take them to a place which they consider a safe place compared to their home land. The following is the description of the door Saeed and Nadia were going through.

“The agent shrugged as though it was of no consequence to him, and Nadia, who had not considered the order of their departure until that moment, and realized there was no good option for either of them, that there were risks to each, to going first and to going second, did not argue, but approached the door, and drawing close she was struck by its darkness, its opacity, the way that it did not reveal what was on the other side, and also did not reflect what was on this side, and so felt equally like a beginning and an end, and she turned to Saeed and found him staring at her, and his face was full of worry, and sorrow, and she took his hands in hers and held them tight, and then, releasing them, and without a word, she stepped through.”

(Hamid, 2017:58).

After crossing the door, it is said in the novel that Nadia and Saeed have arrived in Mykonos, an island in Greece. Such event is considered as the irreducible elements of magic, because in our real space there's no evidence that door alike having such supernatural power which could teleport people from one place into another place miles away really exists. Even nowadays, science has not yet reached at such ability.

“Nadia and Saeed quickly located a cluster of fellow countrywomen and -men and learned that they were on the Greek island of Mykonos, a great draw for tourists in the summer, and, it seemed, a great draw for migrants this winter, and that the doors out, which is to say the doors to richer destinations, were heavily guarded, but the doors in, the doors from poorer places, were mostly left unsecured, perhaps in the hope that people would go back to where they came from—although almost no one ever did—or perhaps because there were simply too many doors from too many poorer places to guard them all.”

(Hamid, 2017:59).

But such event could also be considered as a real phenomenon, for Nadia and Saeed have no surprise when they are facing the door. Not only do Nadia and

Saeed believe, but all the people especially the refugees that such miraculous door really exists. Faris (2004:14) mentions that “the magic grows almost imperceptibly out of the real and the narrator registers no surprise, with the result that the element of surprise is redirected onto the history we are about to witness.”

Clarke (2015) accounts that “those (refugees) who reached Greece were in the European Union, but their journeys often didn’t end there. They tried to get further north, perhaps to Germany, where opportunities and welcome are seen as greater.” Germany’s Chancellor Angela Merkel as cited in IBT reports that “We agree that the commission should define safe countries of origin, that European countries should join forces to help Italy and Greece open registration centers, and that those who have no right to stay go back to their countries of origin.” The statement makes it clear that refugees who have no permission to stay are expected to return to their respective countries of origin (Tomkiw, 2015).

“Without warning people began to rush out of the camp and Saeed and Nadia heard a rumor that a new door out had been found, a door to Germany, and so they ran too, in the middle of the crowd initially, but striding swiftly so they were soon closer to the front. The crowd filled the narrow road and overflowed into the margins and stretched many hundreds of meters at its longest, and Saeed wondered where they were going, and then up ahead he saw they were approaching a hotel or resort of some kind. As they drew nearer he glimpsed a line of men in uniform blocking their way, and he told Nadia, and they were both frightened, and started to slow down, and allow people to pass them, because they had seen in their city what happens when bullets are fired into an unarmed mass of people. But in the end no bullets were fired, the uniformed men simply stopped the crowd and stood their ground, and a few brave or desperate or enterprising souls tried to make it through, running at high speed on either side, where there were gaps, but these few were caught, and after an hour or so the crowd dispersed and most people headed back to the camp.”

(Hamid, 2017:62).

It’s depicted by the quotation above that the door considered heading to Germany are heavily guarded by the officer, they would arrest the refugees who were desperate to break through the door in case that they are expected to

return to their homeland. In this case, the element of surprise in confronting bizarre event is redirected into the history of the refugee crisis happened in the novel. The existence of the magical door in the novel has become the manifestation of the national border that everyone who experience such tragedy wants to cross the line with the intention to get a decent life. Another magical elements served in the novel is when Nadia and Saeed have arrived in a mansion in London after leaving Greece. They left on Saturday morning through the door they got from Nadia's plus one. In the mansion in London, Nadia and Saeed are not alone, people from the African to Eastern-world countries also come there from the magical door. In the novel it is mentioned that people filled the mansion are from Nigeria, Somalia, Thailand, and Myanmar. In a Monday morning, when the housekeeper of the mansion came to work, the mansion had already filled by various ages, children to adults, from the west as far as Guatemala and from the east as far as Indonesia. And it is clear that the mentioned countries are from the region which western discourse refers it as the third-world countries.

“When it was dark people began to emerge from the upstairs room where Nadia and Saeed had themselves first arrived: a dozen Nigerians, later a few Somalis, after them a family from the borderlands between Myanmar and Thailand. More and more and more.”

(Hamid, 2017:69).

However, their arrival was not without resistance, yet they received resistance from nativist groups nodded by the local government, giving rise to clashes or hostilities between migrant groups and nativist groups, resulting in casualties.

“when they heard shouting up ahead and saw people running, and they realized that their street was under attack by a nativist mob, Palace Gardens Terrace being roiled in a way that belied its name. The mob looked to Nadia like a strange and violent tribe, intent on their destruction, some armed with iron bars or knives, and she and Saeed turned and ran, but could not escape.”

(Hamid, 2017:74).

On the other hand, people from western countries on the other hemisphere found themselves passing through the magical door with no resistance and goes well. An old man and a wrinkled man from Prinsengracht, Amsterdam walked through the warehouse door and found themselves in Santa Teresa Rio de Janeiro bloodlessly.

“On his next visit the wrinkled man invited the elderly man to come with him through the black door that was inside the shed. The elderly man did so, walking slowly, as the wrinkled man did as well, and at the other side of that door the elderly man found himself being helped to his feet by the wrinkled man in the hilly neighborhood of Santa Teresa, in Rio de Janeiro, on a day that was noticeably younger and warmer than the day he had left in Amsterdam.”

(Hamid, 2017:96).

Or an accountant in Kentish Town, London who tried to commit a suicide attempt, but the effort had failed because he saw a black door in his house and he was swallowed into curiosity and eventually walked through the door and found himself in Namibia. They arrived with no significant obstacles. It's a portrayal of inequality about the way people from western countries perceive people from African to Eastern-world countries (orientalism), and vice versa (occidentalism) as a postcolonial conduct.

“Later his daughter and his best friend would receive via their phones a photo of him, on a seaside that seemed to have no trees, a desert seaside, or a seaside that was in any case dry, with towering dunes, a seaside in Namibia, and a message that said he would not be returning, but not to worry, he felt something, he felt something for a change, and they might join him, he would be glad if they did, and if they chose to, a door could be found in his flat. With that he was gone, and his London was gone, and how long he remained in Namibia it was hard for anyone who formerly knew him to say.”

(Hamid, 2017:73).

The irreducible elements of magic also disrupt the given idea about cause and effect. Hence the event makes it difficult to distinguish whether the event is affecting another event or vice versa. Faris (2004:10) suggests that “In the course of highlighting such issues, irreducible magic frequently disrupts the ordinary logic

of cause and effect.” In the novel it is told that after passing through the door Nadia felt that his body was getting cold, bruised, and wet. She believed that the wet from her body was caused by her own sweat. Although later on, they realized that they are bedridden on a bathroom of public space, hence it is not clear whether Nadia's body is really wet caused by her own sweat after passing through the door, or it is because they were in the bathroom of the public space. The quotation bellow is how the idea is narrated.

“Nadia experienced a kind of extinguishing as she entered the blackness and a gasping struggle as she fought to exit it, and she felt cold and bruised and damp as she lay on the floor of the room at the other side, trembling and too spent at first to stand, and she thought, while she strained to fill her lungs, that this dampness must be her own sweat. Saeed was emerging and Nadia crawled forward to give him space, and as she did so she noticed the sinks and mirrors for the first time, the tiles of the floor, the stalls behind her, all the doors of which save one were normal doors, all but the one through which she had come, and through which Saeed was now coming, which was black, and she understood that she was in the bathroom of some public place.”

(Hamid, 2017:58).

The irreducible elements of magic also comprise the elements of reality and it could be accepted as logical, for the people in the novel have no surprise nor the doubt towards the existence of the magical door. It is clearly different from fantastical stories that the phenomena occur in the stories are indeed set in the world of the author's imagination and are not in the real world that we inhabit like in the most magical realism narrative does. In this case, the magic occurs in our real world.

“Saeed asked where the door was and where it led to, and the agent replied that the doors were everywhere but finding one the militants had not yet found, a door not yet guarded, that was the trick, and might take a while.”

(Hamid, 2017:51).

From the quotation above the existence of the door are not only believed by Nadia and Saeed, but also believed by the other people such as the agent who offered Nadia and Saeed to cross the door, and the militant group that is looking for the rest

of the door spread throughout the city. The purpose is to emphasize that such phenomenon seems real because everyone experiences it, therefore the reader may catch such event actually occurs organically. Faris (2004:8) states that “these irreducible elements are well assimilated into the realistic textual environment rarely causing any comment by narrators or characters, who model such an acceptance for their readers.” As a result, the conclusions contained in the text are given to the readers. The appreciation depends on the background of the readers so that the readers play a significant role in producing the meaning of a text. The following is another quotation of the irreducible elements of magic as a real phenomenon. People in the novel heard the presence about the door and some have experience in getting through it.

“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.”

(Hamid, 2017:42).

4.1.2 Phenomenal World

Phenomenal world is the realism in the term of magical realism, it means that the real data found in the novel are related to realistic object that could be identified by our empirically-based knowledge. It consists of the detailed presence of mundane materials including geographical space (Greece, London, California) as the setting of the novel, electronic devices (Laptop and flat-screen TV) in Nadia’s office, Saeed’s cars, Nadia’s motorcycle, helicopters operated by militants, currency (dollar and euro) Nadia exchanged, bomb explosion during the riot in Saeed and Nadia’s city, etc. The existence of the realistic materials in the novel creates the space of the world we inhabit. The realistic object should consist of signifier-signified idea in which the existence of the object as the signifier must really exists in our physical space, hence we could address it as the phenomenal world. Faris suggests that this characteristic is what makes the narrative differs from much fantasy and allegory.

Roland Barthes as cited in Faris (2004:28) claims that “realism endows details with an “*effet de réel*” (reality effect), which conveys not any particular information but rather the idea that this story is real.” This idea describes that the story based on the phenomenal world setting brings the intention that the story may really happens. However, the existence of the irreducible elements of magic within the phenomenal world in the story makes the spectators conclude that maybe the story is just a fantasy. And this will later trigger the audience towards the feeling of unsettling doubt.

The appearance of the irreducible elements of magic and the ordinary elements in the narrative shares equal portion. as Brenda Cooper as cited in Faris (2004:15) conveys that “the mysterious, sensuous, unknown, and unknowable are not in the subtext, as in realist writing, but rather share the fictional space with history.” The idea is that the magical things are not being an appendage in the second space but the two worlds have the same significant role in the narrative. It is depicted in the novel that the existence of the magical door has been reported over the radios by the most reputable international broadcasters. And the existence of the door has become the trending topic discussed by leaders around the world. Therefore, the radio as the phenomenal world and the magical door reported through that media are grounded in the text.

“...and also because those with shortwave radios claimed that even the most reputable international broadcasters had acknowledged the doors existed, and indeed were being discussed by world leaders as a major global crisis.”

(Hamid, 2017:50).

Another detailed strong presence of this understanding of event is depicted when Saeed and Nadia were on a beach shortly after they arrived in Greece, and immediately moving out from the public space. The feeling of a cold breeze, and smelling the brine in the air are the detail of the ordinary phenomena that we experience while we are on a beach. The following is how the idea is narrated.

“...and they made their way outside and found themselves between two low buildings, perceiving a sound like a shell held to their ears and feeling a cold breeze on their faces and smelling brine in the air and they looked and saw a stretch of sand and low gray waves coming in and it seemed miraculous, although it was not a miracle, they were merely on a beach.”

(Hamid, 2017:59).

The next data of the phenomenal world in the novel is the presence of motorcycle and electronic devices such as TV and laptops Nadia’s going to take that we usually use in our daily basis.

“Nadia hefted two laptop computers in their carrying cases and her floor’s flat-screen TV, but in the end she did not take the TV because it would have been difficult to load onto her motorcycle.”

(Hamid, 2017:42).

4.1.3 Unsettling Doubt

This understanding emerges from the two contradictories of event between the irreducible elements of magic and the phenomenal world that are collided in the text. This idea generates the hesitation for the readers to resolve whether fantastical elements in the story were real or not, although most magical realist narrators don’t give the conclusion on their stories. The expectation towards this condition is reverted to the spectators, therefore some people may feel less hesitate than the others depend on the cultural background surrounding the spectators. The hesitation towards the event may blurs the existence of the magical thing, perceiving it as a mere hallucination or a dream like much of the western culture does, because rationality dominates its culture since post-enlightenment era.

Faris (2004:17) marks that “the question of belief is central here, this hesitation frequently stemming from the implicit clash of cultural systems within the narrative, which moves toward belief in extrasensory phenomena but narrates from the post-Enlightenment perspective and in the realistic mode that traditionally exclude them.” Therefore, the idea of being in this condition is rather based on our cultural background that perceive it. This kind of situation evokes as the magical event is being doubted by the narrator that after serving the magical phenomenon

as being natural, the narrator gives the phenomenon a chance of possibility for the readers to interpret such as a dream experienced by the character, or the event being questioned by other characters. As a result, the phenomenon becomes unsettled that left us perplexed towards its status. Hence some readers may conclude that the fantastical event happened in the story is just a dream, although the narrator never explicitly mentions whether such incident is true or not. The hesitation towards this conception in the novel is illustrated when the people tend to accept the door exists, but at the same time the others insult that such door are nonsense, and they are just a delusion of the fools. The following is how this pattern is narrated.

“Most people thought these rumors to be nonsense, the superstitions of the feeble-minded. But most people began to gaze at their own doors a little differently nonetheless.”

(Hamid, 2017:43).

Another hesitation towards this anomaly is shown when Nadia dreamed back to the mansion where she first came in London. The feeling when she crossed the door were so real that she experiences the same feeling of suffocation when she managed to arrive in Greece through that strange door. This statement will lead to the hesitation that some people may conclude that the door and all the experiences just happened in Nadia’s dream. The following is the experience of Nadia’s dream.

“One night as Nadia slept on their cot beside Saeed she had a dream, a dream of the girl from Mykonos, and she dreamt that she had returned to the house they had first arrived at in London and had gone upstairs and passed back through the door to the Greek isle, and when Nadia woke she was almost panting, and felt her body alive, or alarmed, regardless changed, for the dream had seemed so real, and after that she found herself thinking of Mykonos from time to time.”

(Hamid, 2017:94).

The following dialogue which also strengthens this hesitate situation is when Nadia offers her psychedelic mushroom to Saeed: “Have you ever done psychedelic mushrooms?” she asked (Hamid, 2017:29). They share their common habit in consuming drugs such as marijuana and psychedelic mushroom as we know that such ingredients could make someone lack of consciousness and make them in the

state of hallucination. American Addiction Centers (2022) states that “these drugs alter one’s conscious perception and thinking processes (cognition) in such a manner that the individual’s conscious experience of the world is altered in a way different than other drugs alter it.” This explanation may lead the readers to conclude that the magical events occur in the story may come from the effect of the drugs. Here is the situation where Saeed feels the sensation after consuming the mushrooms.

“So he was unprepared for the feeling of awe that came over him, the wonder with which he then regarded his own skin, and the lemon tree in its clay pot on Nadia’s terrace, as tall as he was, and rooted in its soil, which was in turn rooted in the clay of the pot, which rested upon the brick of the terrace, which was like the mountaintop of this building, which was growing from the earth itself, and from this earthy mountain the lemon tree was reaching up, up, in a gesture so beautiful that Saeed was filled with love, and reminded of his parents, for whom he suddenly felt such gratitude, and a desire for peace, that peace should come for them all, for everyone, for everything, for we are so fragile, and so beautiful, and surely conflicts could be healed if others had experiences like this, and then he regarded Nadia and saw that she was regarding him and her eyes were like worlds.”

(Hamid, 2017:29).

Despite the event above could make the readers to feel doubt towards the existence of magic, yet other phenomenon as well could bring the people to feel less hesitate towards the existence of magic. It is depicted when the magical event in the novel has become a part of ordinary phenomenon. In the novel (as I have mentioned above in the phenomenal world) the event delivers the appearance of the strange phenomenon reported by the most reputable international broadcasters like a normal news, and it is being discussed by all the government around the world as the occurrence of major global crisis (Hamid, 2017:50). It means that the event is accepted as the real by the media and the people, as Faris has been mentioned that some people may feel less hesitate towards the event. It depends on the cultural background surrounding the readers, for instance people from African to Eastern-world countries may feel less hesitate in confronting at such event, for most of them still believe with their local wisdom inherited by their ancestors, in spite western

cultural practices have also influenced their indigenous cultural behaviors in colonization era.

4.1.4 Merging Realms

This part of magical realism narrative embarks when the two elements between the fantastic and the realistic world are facing each other in the text. It means that the two contradictory realms are not actually merged and form a new world, but rather they are the realms that stand still with their own entity, not the world that one overrides the other. It is the two worlds which run parallel in the text as a liminal world. A space in between atmosphere. The example towards this circumstance is like people in a sub-urban area like Marrie Darriuseq said as cited in Faris (2004:21) that “this situation as symptomatic of certain aspects of contemporary life, such as living in a suburb, which “is a rather undifferentiated in-between...” Not really sure whether they are a part of the rural life or the urban one, for their civilization are both influenced by both area that makes them have no clear enough explanatory placing, hence it can make them to be misplaced. The subject matter related to the merging realm in the novel is that when the world without the territorial borders invading the law-of-the-real-world border which plays a role in determining the territorial boundaries of the countries around the world. The magical door in the novel has a role to eradicate the territorial border in the real world. It is depicted by just passing the door it could take you to a place miles away without having to prepare the documents to get the authority when visiting a country nor have you take a plane to be able to reach an area miles away.

The conflict occurred in the novel is expected from the result of a territorial boundary that allows a certain community to feel more superior over the others and vice versa. It is portrayed in the novel by the riot between the nativist group and the refugees from the region which western discourse refers it as developing countries filled London.

“The news in those days was full of war and migrants and nativists, and it was full of fracturing too, of regions pulling away from nations, and cities pulling away from hinterlands, and it seemed that as

everyone was coming together everyone was also moving apart. Without borders nations appeared to be becoming somewhat illusory, and people were questioning what role they had to play. Many were arguing that smaller units made more sense, but others argued that smaller units could not defend themselves.”

(Hamid, 2017:86).

Therefore, the combination between the realistic realm and the nonsensical-borderless world is central here, contesting the established concept towards territorial boundaries and questioning what actually indigenous is. Because human from long ago have migrated from one place into another place and always will be. It gives the insight about what would happen if there were no boundaries around the world. In which nowadays human life activity is no longer tied within the local territory but rather influenced by other region miles away due to the emergence of the internet.

4.1.5 Disruptions of Time, Space, and Identity

This idea evokes as a result of the other characteristics of magical realism that intervened each other in the text, hence as the story progresses the readers have been carried away into the state of confusion in deciding the exact time, space, and identity served in the text. The disruption of the space in the novel, for instance is portrayed by Saeed and Nadia’s reaction towards the appearance of the fox in garden of Saeed and Nadia’s room in London. They were both amazed, and wondering how can such kind of animal survived in London. Other refugees who live under the same roof with Saeed and Nadia also convince that they have never seen such kind of animal when they arrived in London, the old woman argues that what they see is just themselves and the manifestation of Saeed and Nadia’s love. The following is how the reaction when Saeed and Nadia first met the fox.

“One night a fox appeared in the garden of the house where Saeed and Nadia were staying. Saeed pointed it out to Nadia through the window of their little back bedroom, and they were both amazed to see it, and wondered how such a creature could survive in London, and where it had come from. When they asked around if anyone else had seen a fox, all said no, and some people told them it might have come through the doors, and others said it might have wandered in from the

countryside, and still others claimed foxes were known to live in this part of London, and an old woman told them they had not seen a fox but rather themselves, their love. They wondered if she meant the fox was a living symbol or the fox was unreal and just a feeling and when others looked they would see no fox at all.”

(Hamid, 2017:77).

In fact, fox is common animal in London, and they have been habitually coexistence with human activities since World War I. Wreth (2014) reported that “The species began encroaching on British cities in the 1930s. Or rather, the city encroached on the foxes. In the years between the two World Wars, Britain’s suburbs pushed deep into the fox’s natural habitat in the English countryside, and in response, many foxes headed for the inner city.” The idea is that it is possible for Nadia and Saeed to feel surprised when facing the animal, as we know that they both came from the outside of London, yet the narrator disrupts as if foxes are animal rarely found in London by the point of view of the other people that no one had ever seen a single fox during their occupation in London except Saeed and Nadia. The incident above creates an oddity of the space known as London. Hence the reader is difficult in deciding whether Nadia and Saeed were in real London or it is just their hallucination that they are in London. Another strangeness that happened in London is that when Nadia and Saeed heard a call to prayer at dawn from the distance as if it is something prevalent like what they used to hear in their homeland, leaving Nadia shocked whether she had returned to their city until she realized that she was still in London and saw Saeed was doing his dawn prayer. The following is how the idea is narrated.

“someone making a call to prayer, at dawn, perhaps over a commandeered karaoke machine, and Nadia was alarmed, waking from a dream and thinking for a second that she was back home in their own city, with the militants, before recalling where she really was, and then she watched, a bit surprised, as Saeed got out of bed and prayed..”

(Hamid, 2017:72).

Other statement which strengthens the notion that the call to prayer did not happen in Nadia’s dream is that they hear it multiple times until the electricity run out

throughout the city: “that night the electricity went out, cut off by the authorities, and Kensington and Chelsea descended into darkness. A sharp fear descended also, and the call to prayer they had often heard in the distance from the park was silenced.” (Hamid, 2017:78). This incident will reorient the given idea of London for the readers who have never been to London in view in the space known as London. As Faris (2004:25) states that “magical realism reorients not only our habits of time and space but our sense of identity as well. The other disruption of space is shown when Saeed could touch his deceased parents when he was doing his prayer: “When he prayed he touched his parents, who could not otherwise be touched, and he touched a feeling that we are all children who lose our parents...” (Hamid, 2017:109). This event could obscure the idea of the real world like there is no boundary between the world Saeed inhabit and the world hereafter.

Moreover, the disruption of time in the novel is delineated by the reunion of Nadia and Saeed in their homeland fifty years later. After fifty years of separation with the same appearance, Nadia with her black robe and Saeed with his beard: “... around them passersby did not pause to look at this old woman in her black robe or this old man with his stubble.” (Hamid, 2017:123). They met at a café near building which used to be Nadia’s flat, and it is said by the narrator that they were both getting younger: “...and they grew younger and more playful as the coffee in their cups diminished...” (Hamid, 2017:123). This statement disrupts the given idea about how time works. When someone aging, it is fact that an individual will grow older as time passes. Although later the narrator mentioned Nadia as old woman and Saeed as old man, there is no explicit statement whether Nadia and Saeed became old just to indicate their aging and not their appearance. Whether their appearance is growing younger despite their ages is still unclear, hence it disrupts the idea of time just like the time itself has stopped, because none of their appearances have changed for fifty years.

Additionally, the disruption of the identity of both main characters in the novel is served when Nadia has no clear intention towards her feeling in confronting male or female individual, for she has the sexual desire towards them both.

“It was not that her sensuality, her sense of the erotic, had died. She found herself aroused readily, by a beautiful man she passed as she walked down to work, by memories of the musician who had been her first lover, by thoughts of the girl from Mykonos. And sometimes when Saeed was out or asleep she pleased herself, and when she pleased herself she thought increasingly of that girl, the girl from Mykonos, and the strength of her response no longer surprised her”
(Hamid, 2017:108).

Or Saeed besides his devotion with his religion: “but in his devotions was ever more devotion, and towards her it seemed there was ever less.” (Hamid, 2017:106), yet he still loves to consume marijuana which is strongly prohibited in Saeed’s religion: “he saw the weed, he started to laugh, almost soundlessly, a gentle rumble, and he said, his voice uncoiling like a slow, languid exhalation of marijuana-scented smoke, “Fantastic.” (Hamid, 2017:106). Nassif (2021) states that in Muslim community the concept of forbidding marijuana is same with alcohol. From this occasion the chance for the readers in deciding the exact characters’ identity is blurred, for the characters have multiple identities throughout the story. Faris (2004:25) states that “the multivocal nature of the narrative and the cultural hybridity that characterize magical realism extends to its characters, which tend toward a radical multiplicity.” The readers may feel confused about Nadia’s gender, or wondering about Saeed’s devotion. Saeed indeed do his prayers, but he also do what is prohibited such as having sexual intercourse and consuming weed with Nadia. Smerecnik *et al.* (2010) states that sexual relation in Islam differs into legitimate and illegitimate. Legitimate means that having sexual relation within marriage, and illegitimate means that having sexual relation outside marriage which is prohibited and socially unacceptable in Muslim community.

4.2 The Construction of Deterritorialization

As I have mentioned in chapter I, deterritorialization is the separation towards cultural, social, and political practices from the native territory. A certain

individual identity is no longer be identified by which a person comes from, but rather enters a more complex stage. The cultural practices from the certain places nowadays are rather influenced by the other form of culture miles away, as a result of the emergence of the internet in the digitalization era as a part of globalization where according to Deleuze and Guatari as cited in Munro and Thanem (2017) conveys that identity and bodies create the new form of earth which eradicated traditional form of social stratification. Therefore, it blurs the root of native-individual cultural identity in the face of the globalization, for the authenticity of culture is produced from the nation-state territorial boundaries. The segregation of the cultural practices can trigger the social sentiment that a certain culture may feel more civilized over the other culture. In the novel the cultural identity as the background of the novel is based on the main characters' attire, behavior, and surrounding. According to Saeed and Nadia's appearance in the novel, both could be identified as they are from Muslim community.

“His name was Saeed and her name was Nadia and he had a beard, not a full beard, more a studiously maintained stubble, and she was always clad from the tips of her toes to the bottom of her jugular notch in a flowing black robe. Back then people continued to enjoy the luxury of wearing more or less what they wanted to wear, clothing and hair wise, within certain bounds of course, and so these choices meant something.”

(Hamid, 2017:8).

Sonday (2016) reports that in Tajikistan police had shaved off beards of almost thirteen thousand men as a result of the sentimental stamp towards radicalization. It means that beard is closely stereotyped with the Muslim community which often regarded as radicalism. Saeed, besides his beard, offers alternative view that his beard has no affiliation with a particular faith: “Nadia looked him in the eye. “You don't say your evening prayers?” she asked. Saeed conjured up his most endearing grin. “Not always. Sadly.” (Hamid, 2017:8). It is also portrayed by his attitude that he loves consuming marijuana and having a relationship with the opposite sex outside marriage with Nadia as I have mentioned above in the *unsettling doubt* and

disruptions of time, space, and identity part, although such action is strongly prohibited by the authorities in Saeed's residence.

“They next faced the problem that confronted all young people in the city who wanted to continue in one another's company past a certain hour. During the day there were parks, and campuses, and restaurants, cafés. But at night, after dinner, unless one had access to a home where such things were safe and permitted, or had a car, there were few places to be alone.”

(Hamid, 2017:19).

Meanwhile, Nadia, besides her conservative appearance, also offers that an attire has no relation with someone's belief: “Saeed asked her about her conservative and virtually all-concealing black robe. “If you don't pray,” he said, lowering his voice, “why do you wear it?” (Hamid, 2017:14). Nadia suggests that she wears such outfit just to keep the distance from a man: “She smiled. Took a sip. And spoke, the lower half of her face obscured by her cup. “So men don't fuck with me,” she said.” (Hamid, 2017:15). Nadia also suggests that her dress as a part of culture has no relation with the territory. It is portrayed by Saeed question when they arrived in Mykonos: “...and that morning he asked Nadia why she still wore her black robes, since here she did not need to, and she said that she had not needed to wear them even in their own city, when she lived alone, before the militants came...” (Hamid, 2017:63). Saeed also feels annoyed with Nadia, for she always wears the black robe although she doesn't pray: “...But it was inexplicable that she continued to wear her black robes, and it grated on him a bit, for she did not pray...” (Hamid, 2017:102). Khazan (2016) reports that there are many variations of what women should dress as a sign of Islamic identity in Muslim countries as far as what women are mandated to cover up. It means that her black robe strongly indicates religious practice such as niqab or burqa like in most women wears in Muslim countries although the narrator does not explicitly mention it.

Nadia's taste of music also influenced by the place miles away from the place where Saeed and Nadia were living: “Nadia selected a record, an album sung by a long-dead woman who was once an icon of a style that in her American

homeland was quite justifiably called soul” (Hamid, 2017:20). From the behavior served by both Nadia and Saeed, their identity has no connection towards their homeland. Their homeland is expected to take place in a country around south Asia to middle-east country based on the identity conflict that I have mentioned above in the *irreducible elements of magic* part, and religious practices performed by the other people in Saeed and Nadia’s homeland.

The emergence of internet contributes a significant role in deterritorializing society through the social media with their smartphones. The social media produces the new form of culture in which people can interchange information of their cultural practices miles away, therefore it creates new identity in the form of their altered avatar on their social media. People may feel that they belong to the other community miles away, although they do not share the same territory. In the novel, it is portrayed by Nadia’s altered version in her social media to hide her true-self: “Nadia frequently explored the terrain of social media, though she left little trace of her passing, not posting much herself, and employing opaque usernames and avatars, the online equivalents of her black robes.” (Hamid, 2017:27).

Jordan (2009) conveys that the emergence of the internet creates the blurring of interest means that it reshaped the social, lifestyle, and cultural practices regarding to one another. Thus the appearance of the magical door in the novel and the internet has the same role to disrupt the main characters identity that they both are erasing the territorial boundaries. People from all over the world are connected into each other without being disrupted by the border itself. In the novel the cultural practice from Saeed and Nadia’s homeland are reshaped after fifty years of separation since the appearance of the door. People from all over the world were easily traveling from one place into another place miles away, hence the cultural practices from the distance place contribute in reshaping the cultural practice towards Saeed and Nadia’s native territory. It is portrayed by the reaction of the people towards Nadia and Saeed’s appearance although they are in the same territory like I have mentioned above in the *disruptions of time, space, and identity* part. Their culture has changed that they look unfamiliar even though their

appearance used to be prevalent in their homeland. As a result from the discussion above, I can conclude that the narrator uses the supernatural door as well as other elements of magical realism as a tool to whisper deterritorialization, for the deterritorialization in the novel subtly merges within the elements of magical realism that later is expected to help me in approaching the critical position of the author that I am going to explain in the next sub chapter.

4.3 Critical Position of The Author

The author of this novel, Mohsin Hamid, was born in 1971 in Lahore, Pakistan. He moved to America at the age of 18 in order to pursue his higher studies at Princeton University and Harvard University, and later he moved back to Lahore as a freelance journalist. During his time in America, he took his time to complete his novel, and subsequently moved to London in 2001 for about 8 years until he acquired British citizenship. He writes several novels such as *Moth smoke* (2002), *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013), *Exit West* (2017), and his latest novel *The Last White Man* (2022). His novels revolves about the problem faced by the people from the ex-colonized countries including *Exit West* that I am going to explain more detail in this sub chapter.

According to the background of the author, Hamid is considered to be a diasporic writer as he gets influenced by both western places he has encountered and his land of birth Pakistan. Hamid has two citizenships entailing Pakistani and British. As a part of Pakistani society, Muslim community is a part of Hamid cultural practice as I know that almost all of Pakistan society embrace Islamic identity. In 2015, the world has witnessed the worst refugee crisis in Europe due to the identity conflicts that have occurred as a result of ongoing political instability in Muslim majority countries. Spindler (2015) reports that on December 7, a total of 911,000 refugees had arrived along the European coast since the beginning of the year, and estimated approximately 3550 lives were reported to have been missing during their journey to Europe. More than 75 percent of those who made it to Europe have fled the conflict and persecution in Syria, Afghanistan, or Iraq.

The conflict is depicted in the novel by the militant groups in search for the individuals who have a particular name considered to have an affiliation with the certain sect. In 2014 Afghanistan had to face political instability as a result of the disputed election involving both rival leaders between Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah for claiming their own victory and blaming each other. The situation deteriorated as a result of Taliban resurgence in purpose of taking control over the reign, thus leading civil war between the Taliban rebels and the government armed forces, causing heavy casualties on both sides including civilians. Human Right Watch (2015) reports that “Taliban stepped up attacks on officials and workers associated with the presidential elections, and targeted other civilians and foreigners.”

The other conflict happened in Syria. The conflict started as a result of the security brutal force against the schoolboys who write revolutionary scribbles on their school wall inflicting the conflict between the protesters against the oppressive reign of Syria’s president Bashar al-Assad. In 2016 *BBC* reports that the conflict later is not just a clash between pro-Assad and the revolutionary activists but escalates in sectarian confrontation between Sunni mostly embraced by Syrian and Shia Alawite which is expected to be a secretive Shia sect affiliated with Bashar al-Assad. The conflict later burst into multi-dimensional conflicts involving foreign intervention as the basis of the terrorism act intending to form an Islamic State covering the Middle East including Syria and Iraq. These conflicts, in consequence, cause the outbreak of massive migration by the middle-east people.

From the events occurred, the conflicts took place in Muslim majority countries, rising the misconception towards Muslim community which is closely related into the act of terrorism. In the novel the author gives alternative insight to contest the misconception towards Muslim community through Saeed and Nadia’s appearance that Nadia’s black robe and Saeed’s beard has no affiliation with the Islamic cultural practices. The main characters appearance as the cultural tradition in their homeland are deterritorialized by the main characters behaviors that their attitude did not represent their Islamic identity. Hence, the actions destabilize the

idea towards the authenticity of someone's identity that the cultural practice is not shaped by the territorial boundaries itself but rather it is shaped by the cultural practice from the distant place.

As a result, the idea of the native and the indigenous are questioned that the refugee crisis happened as a result of the territorial boundaries which make the people who live or born inside the boundaries feel that they are the natives who have the right to decide whether outsiders can stay or not. In the novel, it is depicted by the rejection towards the refugees by the people of Vienna.

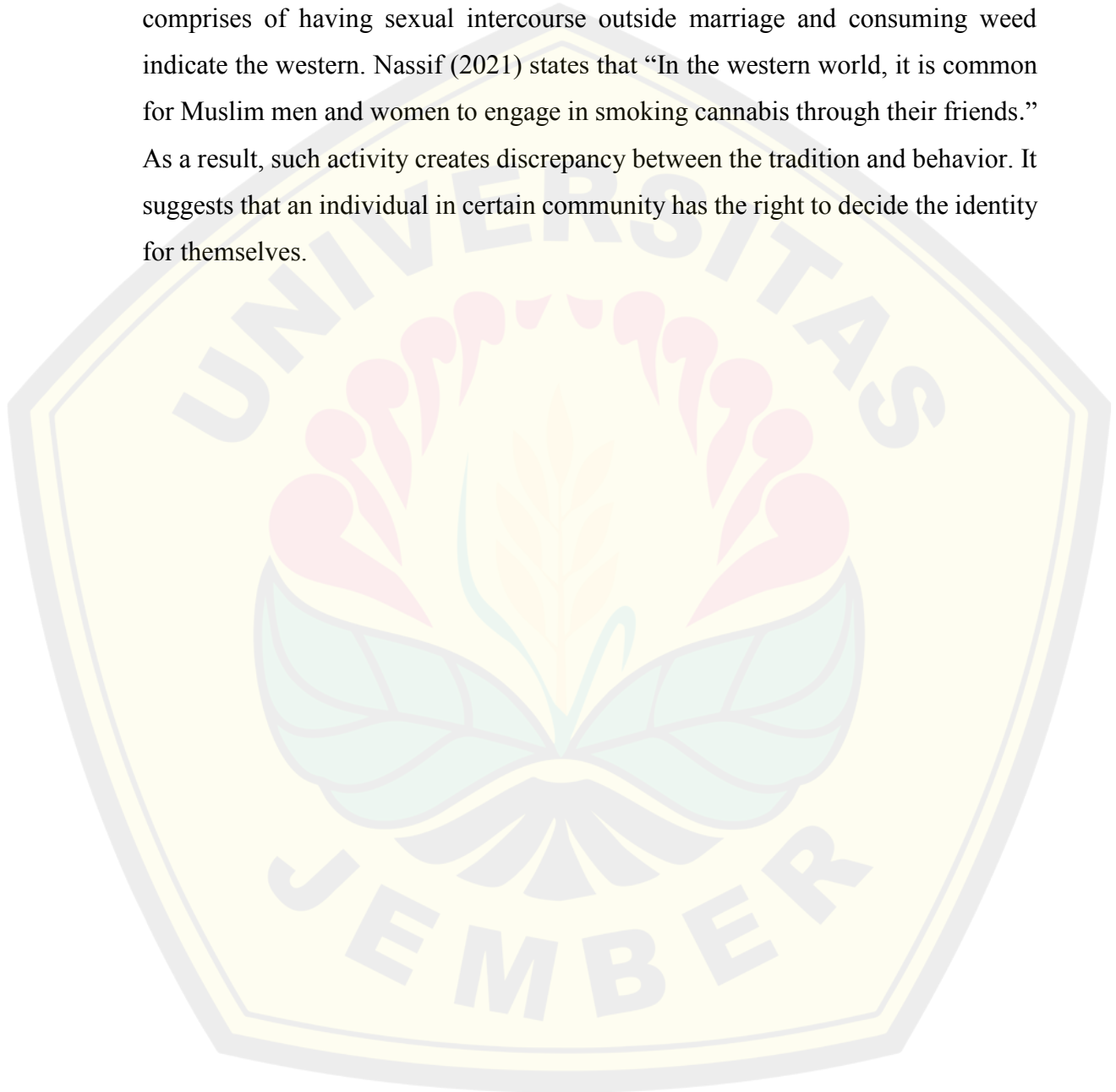
“...and the militants had perhaps hoped to provoke a reaction against migrants from their own part of the world, who had been pouring into Vienna, and if that had been their hope then they had succeeded, for the young woman had learned of a mob that was intending to attack the migrants gathered near the zoo...”

(Hamid, 2017:61).

Meanwhile, Spindler (2015) reports that in September 5 more than 1000 refugees gathered to spark the protest against Hungary's government refusal to provide a train to Austria and Germany on Austria's frontier. Hence the author of the novel tends to contest towards the grand narrative of the territorial borders that the identity of people is relative because humans since ancient times have traveled around the world seeking a new life. This notion is emphasized by Hamid himself saying “We are all migrants through time.” (Hamid, 2017:113).

From the discussion in this subchapter, I can conclude that the position of the author as diasporic writer, neither is he favoring on the western culture nor the eastern one, but rather negotiating his own position in between both sides suggesting that the culture itself is dynamic as a result from the deterritorialization process. The author offers the idea of the openness towards the contemporary culture and reject the absolute idea towards territorial boundaries as the spirit of postmodernism. According to *Merriam-Webster* dictionary, postmodernism is relating to various movements in reaction to modernism that are typically characterized by a return to traditional materials or by ironic self-reference and

absurdity. This notion is depicted in the novel by the end of the story. Although the surrounding in Saeed and Nadia's homeland have changed half a century later, after they first crossed the magical door including its people, they both still look the same with their appearances from fifty years before. Nadia with her conservative black robe and Saeed with his stubble indicate the eastern in spite of their liberal behavior comprises of having sexual intercourse outside marriage and consuming weed indicate the western. Nassif (2021) states that "In the western world, it is common for Muslim men and women to engage in smoking cannabis through their friends." As a result, such activity creates discrepancy between the tradition and behavior. It suggests that an individual in certain community has the right to decide the identity for themselves.



CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

Conclusively, this chapter is supposed to give the brief insight of the profound analysis from the previous chapter. The analysis focuses on two research questions that I have mentioned in chapter I. The first question deals with the construction of deterritorialization in the novel, and the second is questioning the critical position of the author. From the discussion, I find that the construction of deterritorialization in the novel is subtly merged within Faris' key elements of magical realism. The author tends to contest the grand narrative of the territorial border as the basis of refugee problem by giving alternative view using discrepancy of the main characters appearance and behavior as his political way in offering his perspective towards territorial borders. He suggests that the refugee problem and discrimination faced by the people from the global east region on account of the territorial border makes people become segregated from each other which can trigger the superiority complex that a certain individual feels more civilized than the other. He uses magical realism narrative to deterritorialize the cultural heritage by using the magical door which can teleport people from one country into another country instantly as the manifestation of the world without the border.

As a diasporic author, half Pakistani half British, Hamid neither he is on the side of the west nor the east, yet he has his own position in seeing the cultural phenomenon in the post-modern life. He tends to criticizes towards the absolute idea of the authenticity of someone's identity that came from the territorial space where an individual is born or due to the line age brought by their ancestor to claim the indigenous so that they deliberately have the right to decide whether someone could stay in their territory or not. In fact, people from long ago despite their lineage have traveled from one place into another place to live nomadically in order to get a better life, but as time passes people create their own territorial boundaries to reassemble with their own kind and segregate with the other, hence it triggers conflict and discrimination between two or more groups. In the digitalization era especially in the emergence of the internet, the traditional view towards the boundaries and the social community has entered into unprecedented complex stage

in which nowadays cultural practice from a territory is influenced by the cultural practice overseas, and it also influences the lifestyle of the people including their preferences towards their appearance or the taste of the art, means that someone's identity can no longer be identified by which someone lives. In sum, Hamid gives the notion that people should travel or choose the identity for themselves freely.



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