NEO-SINCERITY: A POST-POSTMODERNIST CRITIQUE OF MOHSIN HAMID'S *EXIT WEST*

By

Maimoona Khan

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF Master of Philosophy in English

To

FACULTY OF LANGUAGES

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES, ISLAMABAD

Maimoona Khan, 2018

THESIS AND DEFENSE APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read the following thesis, examined the defense, are satisfied with the overall exam performance, and recommend the thesis to the Faculty of English Studies for acceptance:

Thesis Title: NEO-SINCERITY: A POST-POSTMODERNIST CRITIQUE OF MOHSIN HAMID'S *EXIT WEST*

Submitted By: Maimoona Khan **Registration** #: 1170-MPhil-lit-S16

Master of Philosophy

Degree name in full

English Literature

Name of Discipline

Saleem Akhtar Khan _____

Name of Research Supervisor

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Safeer Awan _____

Name of Dean

Brig Muhammad Ibrahim _____

Name of Director General

Author's Declaration

I Maimoona Khan

Daughter of Rozi Khan

Registration # 1170-MPhil-lit-S16

Discipline English Literature

Candidate of Master of Philosophy at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis NEO-SINCERITY: A POST-POSTMODERNIST CRITIQUE OF MOHSIN HAMID'S *EXIT WEST* submitted by me in partial fulfilment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution. I also understand that if evidence of plagiarism is found in my thesis/dissertation at any stage, even after the award of a degree, the work may be cancelled and the degree revoked.

Signature of Candidate _____

Date _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I am very thankful to God for making me capable of completing my dissertation timely and smoothly. I couldn't get through this research if He hadn't helped me out. Secondly, I would like to thank my Supervisor who was always just one call away. He has guided me very well, pointed out my mistakes timely, took time out of his busy schedule to discuss my dissertation. My supervisor directed me towards the right path and I walked on it. Thirdly and lastly, I would like to thank my in laws who supported me throughout my research. My father-in-law pushed me to complete it as soon as possible whenever he felt like I was drifting away. My husband made sure I get a comfortable environment where my concentration wouldn't diverge. My mother-in-law took care of my baby while I was busy working on a computer. I couldn't have completed my thesis if I didn't have a complete support from these three people. I would also like to thank my parents who called me every day to acquire whether I was working on my thesis or not. I am very grateful to God, my supervisor and my familial relationships.

Maimoona Khan

ABSTRACT

This study addresses the issue of the literary reception and representation of the renascent fanaticism, neo-sincerity, which is becoming zeitgeist of the contemporary world. Focusing Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*, I have explored the fictional rendering of the prevailing political insurgencies and cultural anomalies. The theoretical foundation of the study is in the post-postmodernist realization of the revival of the essentialist ideologies and parochial policies. It has been made explicit that the welcoming west of the past has transformed into a cultural crucible for the emigrants—epitomized in the characters of Saeed and Nadia. Moreover, it has also been brought to the limelight that one of the most effective triggers for the current wave of hatred in the western social consciousness is Islamophobia. Delving into the issue of racial and religious prejudices, I have tried to explore the fictional representation of the western movement from the ideal of co-existence to the dogmatic essentialism. Thus, the study helps to understand how the contemporary Pakistani literature in English approaches current global traumas and cultural trends.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements……...i

Abstract…….ii

Table of Contents…….iii

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background……..……1

1.2 Statement of the problem…….……3

1.3 Research Questions…….…….4

1.4 Research Objectives…….4

1.5 Delimitations……4

1.6 Chapter breakdown……..5

1.7 Significance of the study…….……7

1.8 Research methodology…….……7

1.9 Theoretical framework…….8

Chapter II Literature Review

2.1: Modernism……..……..……10

2.2: Postmodernism…….……...…….….12

2.3: Post-postmodernism……...……...14

2.3.1: Neo-sincerity……..……..…….….16

2.3.2 Digitalization…….…….…….…20

2.4 Mohsin Hamid…….…..…….22

Chapter III <u>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</u>

3.1 Research Methodology……..……25

3.2 Theoretical Framework…….……....26

3.2.1 Neo-sincerity…….…….……27

3.2.2 Digitalization…….…….31

Chapter IV <u>POST-POSTMODERNISM IN MOHSIN HAMID'S *EXIT WEST*</u>

4.1: Neo-sincerity……....……..……...33

4.1.1 Response of the Host…….……..……24

4.1.2 Immigrant Reaction……...……..39

4.1.3 Hamid's Intrusive Voice……..……...……49

4.4 Other Post-postmodernist Dimensions…….……..63

<u>Conclusion</u>

Conclusion…….…..…….66

Works Cited…….…….70

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

1.1: Background:

In the wake of recent political upheaval, brought forth by the president of United States Donald Trump, Mohsin Hamid has beautifully depicted the story of a Pakistani couple seeking shelter in foreign countries. A new political and cultural shift has been catalyzed by which political upheaval can be seen in the world after the incident of 9/11 that has drawn a fine line between America and the underdeveloped eastern countries or in other words, the Muslim countries. America who, once used to host the entire world, has turned its back towards the east and holds the entire Muslim nation in contempt. This change was being seen in the early 2000s and continues till today. America used to give out nationalities and equal rights to every non-American and was known for providing the non-American with all the living facilities that a native enjoyed. Similarly, Islamophobia was not an issue either but right after the Twin Towers catastrophe, America has revived its political and cultural stance and has made life difficult for the non-Americans as well as the eastern half of the world. This shift does not occur only in politics but can be seen in music, movies, seasons and other such shows that are being watched on TV or internet. Americans have turned their mind frames against the east that makes them eye every non-American doubtfully. This change started off in American literature but has now seeped through Pakistani literature as well. Pakistanis seems to have realized that they are constantly being wronged and in order to stand up for themselves, they have started writing such pieces of literature that sheds lights on their point of view. Recently, Mohsin Hamid

wrote a novel titled as *Exit West* (M. Hamid) that deals with the problem of American Neo-sincerity which is basically a revival of their essentialist stance and the effects of this revival on the Pakistani nation. The text of the novel is being closely investigated and explored in this research on surface as well as on a deeper level in order to highlight the effects of the western neo-sincerity on Muslims as a whole and specifically on the Muslims living in America. The text of the novel has been anatomized by making use of the major tenet of literary theory of post-postmodernism; Neo-sincerity.

Before the arrival of Neo-sincerity, United States of America was known as a nation warmly welcoming the foreigners into their land. It was known as a Universal Host country for the entire world and welcoming immigrants into America was said to be a grand American tradition. According to USA, the arrival of immigrants provided U.S with innovation, economic growth and ruled out radicalization. America used to be a hub for people from all around the world and was called a melting pot because people coming from different cultures were aligning themselves with the American culture, thus melting into their culture and becoming one of them. It was also called a salad bowl on the basis of the fact that people used to come to America from different countries and live there peacefully, thus giving off a view of a delicious salad bowl where we can see different shapes, tastes and textures but together, they make a single dish. This concept of the melting pot and the salad bowl was later dissolved by the western essentialist stance of Neo-sincerity.

The shift in the American attitude is quite visible in the text of the novel *Exit West* (M. Hamid). The researcher has used a latest literary theory named as Post-postmodernism in order to analyze the text of the novel that is the latest linker of the literary theory of Modernism. Though Post-postmodernism have its roots in

Modernism but it differentiates itself from Modernism and Post-modernism era in a sense that it talks about contemporary issues being faced by the contemporary world like Neo-sincerity, Digitalization and much more. The change in American attitude, that has sidelined the Muslims completely and has alienated the Americans from rest of the world, is a result of Neo-sincerity because Americans have realized that mixing up with other cultures did not work for them so they went back to their essentialist fundamentals. They have started strictly believing that the people who are born out of pure American blood are the actual Americans and rest of the people who upon being born in America or upon getting a nationality call themselves as Americans are actually the others because they simply do not belong to the genuine American bloodline. The text of the novel *Exit West* (2017*)* narrates the story of two others in west; Britain and America.

The story of the novel revolves around two characters; Saeed and Nadia. It is basically a love story of how a Muslim couple, living in an unnamed city, fell in love and were discriminated on the basis of their race, religion, culture and looks throughout the text of the novel. After a war broke out in that city, they had to flee to California but things did not work out for them in California either, so they had to leave for London and they finally settled in Marin. Their journey was full of agony and they were constantly hiding themselves from American and British people although they had not committed any crime, their only crime seems to be the fact that they were Muslims and they looked like Muslims. They had to face severe circumstances, they worked too hard, were paid less and they lived a laborious life in the foreign land. Even after working tirelessly for longer period of hours, they could not earn enough to fulfill their needs and find a peaceful way of living. At the end of the novel, they settled down in a community that had lesser contact with the natives

because they were not allowed to mingle with them. They were given a certain space that lacked basic necessities of life, nevertheless, it was a heaven for Saeed and Nadia. Apart from projecting Saeed and Nadia as a prey to the America's Neo-sincerity, the author also talks about the drastic effects of digitalization on our era and has put emphasis on how mobile phones and media are robbing us off our peace of mind.

The story of the novel is full of instances where Americans are acting upon their belief of Neo-sincerity. Saeed and Nadia were finding a hard time living in the west, they were constantly being forced to flee from one place to another. The text of the novel proves that the country that had previously promised to shelter the needy was now banning the needy from entering their country as they have put multiple bans on the American-Muslims. This political, social and cultural turmoil can be seen in the novel *Exit West* (2017) through the lens of literary theory of Post-postmodernist.

1.2: THESIS STATEMENT:

The contemporary scenario is marked with the startling renascence of essentialist ideologies and their ramifications. The literary works, being representative of the cultural and social upheavals, embody the cataclysmic paradigm shifts. Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West (2017),* penetrates into this disruptive dimension of the post-postmodern world. It takes up the problem of the revival of fanaticism and parochialism in the contemporary Western societies from the perspective of immigrants.

1.3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

This study aims at answering the following research questions;

I. How does the text of the selected novel reveal the revival of essentialism, Neo-Sincerity, in the contemporary west?

II. To what extent does the western revival of essentialism have Islamophobic tinge in it?

III. How does the novel thematize the post-postmodern issue of digitalisation of the contemporary world?

1.4: RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

Following are the objectives of the research

- To highlight the revival of essentialism termed as Neo-sincerity
- To explain American Islamophobia and the reason behind it
- To examine the effects of digitalisation on the human being

1.5: DELIMITATION:

Mohsin Hamid is a British Pakistani novelist, he has spent his childhood in United States of America and came back to his homeland, Lahore, at the age of 9. Upon turning 18, he once again went back to US and got admission in Princeton University and returned to his homeland after graduation. He has written four novels so far and each of them has been labelled as a best seller. His wrote *Moth Smoke* (2000) *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), *How to get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013) and *Exit West (2017)*. *Exit West* is Hamid's latest publication that took place in 2017. Being a contemporary novel, it touches upon contemporary political and social issues that deals with the western neo-sincerity and the plight of Muslims around the world because of the shift in the western essentialist stance. Moreover, the text of the novel digs deeper into the migrant crisis that has been broken out in the western world after the incident of 9/11. Since the text of the novel represents current political upheaval, so I have //decided to combine a current theory and a current issue

in order to carry out my research. The research aims at unveiling the western ideologies of neo-sincerity that proves to be the driving force for migrant crisis and Muslim's precarious circumstances around the globe.

1.6: CHAPTER BREAKDOWN:

This dissertation comprises of four chapters in total followed by a section that concludes the entire dissertation. These five chapters explain each and every angle of the presented issue, proves it and concludes it. The first chapter of this dissertation explains the background of the study. This chapter has put forth the research questions that are going to be answered through the analysis of the study, significance of the study has been made a part of it since it is important to explain as why the specific study has been carried out and what the outcomes of this study are. Moreover, statement of the problem, research objectives, a brief explanation of the framework being used to carry out the analysis and the methodology that the researcher intends to use is being mentioned in the first chapter of the dissertation. In short, the first chapter narrows down the basics for the study. The topics being discussed in this chapter are later discussed in detail in the research. The first chapter sets one mind to what the problem is, what is being used to identify and how it is being identified.

Second chapter of the research deals with the literature review that is basically a review on the study being held. I have adopted a step by step method in order to lay down the origin of the adopted theory that is why she has first mentioned works on Modernism, then on Post-modernism and lastly on Post-postmodernism. Post-postmodernism is being explained generally followed by a detailed understanding of its two tenets, Neo-sincerity and Digitalization, that are being used by the researcher This chapter provides insight of several works regarding Neo-sincerity and

Digitalization and provides one with a proof that the theory being used in the analysis has been worked upon by a number of critics and is proved right and valid. A shift in literature, according to the change in social and political background, can be seen through the studies being mentioned in the second chapter of this dissertation. So basically I have tried to validate the literary theory that she has used in order to conduct my analysis.

Third chapter of the research deals with the methodology and the framework being used in the research. It simply states the method through which I have analyzed the text and has explained the framework in detail that comprises of various issues regarding Neo-sincerity and Digitalization. A number of problems that are being faced by American-Muslims nowadays is being discussed with the help of blogs, articles, journals and books. The issues being pointed out in the analysis are backed up by writers from around the world who have mentioned about the circumstances that Muslims have to deal with in the west and these circumstances are also present in the text of the novel. This chapter basically forms a structure on which I intended to build her analysis.

Fourth chapter is the most important chapter of this thesis because it deals with the findings of the research. I have taken instances from the text of the novel along with quoting text where required and analyzed those quotes and instances through the lens of literary theory of post-postmodernism. The analysis is divided into four parts; first part explains the American attitude, second part explains the native attitude, third part explains the reaction of the others while the fourth and last part deals with the negatives effects of technology on the 21st century human being. The four-leveled analysis provides answers for the research questions and meets the research objectives.

The last section of the research states a detailed conclusion. It aims at answering the research questions and meeting research objectives while talking about how the characters of the novels are relatable to the current time American-Muslims. It helps to make us understand the American stance and makes us realize that America is not a salad bowl or a melting pot anymore. It forces us to realize our own worth and act accordingly.

1.7: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

This research is significant for various reasons. It helps to make us understand the stance of the author where he has explained the ideals of American Islamophobia and has proved American Neo-sincerity as a threat to the entire Muslim world. Secondly, it highlights the contemporary cultural dynamics that the whole world is going through. A cultural shift is clearly being seen in the entire world after 9/11, American treatment of the others is not the same anymore and they are not the same welcoming nation that they once used to be. They doubt the entire non-American world and hold Muslims in contempt, generally. This study explains that shift while proving the American-Muslims' demise. Thirdly and lastly, it is the first novel in Pakistani literature exploring such an important issue or in order words, it helps to locate Pakistani literary yield into the contemporary critical continuum.

1.8: RESERARCH METHODOLOGY:

This research is purely a qualitative analysis that analyses the text of the novel *Exit West (2017)* on the deeper level in order to highlight the contemporary political upheaval. The text has been quoted and explained further in order to bring out the deeper meanings and instances from the novel are taken into account and lined with American Neo-sincerity in a very convincing way. This dissertation basically explores

the text of the novel *Exit West (2017)* in the light of literary theory of Post-postmodernism. A strong theoretical framework has been built that backs up the research's analysis and the framework lays down the basics for the research along with its validation. The research is strictly concerned with two main tenets of the theory named as Neo-sincerity and Digitalization. Neo-sincerity deals with the plight of the Muslims in America while digitalization deals with the plight of the entire mankind of the current age. The combination of neo-sincerity and digitalization forms the core of the analysis of this dissertation.

1.9: THEORTICAL FRAMEWORK:

This research makes use of one of the latest literary theories, that is, Post-postmodernism. It has emerged in the post-9/11 scenario of confrontation and trauma. The most prominent among its proclivities include Neo-sincerity and Digitalization. This research has focussed specifically the theoretical dimension of Neo-sincerity and its manifestation in literature.

Neo-sincerity comes under the literary theory of Post-postmodernism. It is a trend in arts, music, literary fiction, films, aesthetics, literary criticism and philosophy. It moves away from concepts of Postmodernist irony and cynicism and appears in works that breaks free from the Postmodernist scepticism. It had appeared in mid-1980s and went popular in 1990s.

David Foster Wallace is an American writer who is the main reason behind popularity of Neo-sincerity. He broke free from the traditional scepticism and wrote with elements of Neo-Sincerity in his works. Adam Kelly later theorized the post-postmodernist ideas presented by David Foster Wallace in his book *David Foster Wallace and Neo-sincerity in American Fiction* (Kelly 44). Neo-sincerity sticks to its

literal meaning, it means that one has to be totally sincere with himself as it talks largely about self-awareness and awareness of the context in which things are happening. Neo-sincerity believes that ironic statements stands nowhere because they escape blameworthiness and criticism and it does not say anything clearly. Neo-sincerity is responsible for the shift in American attitude.

Post-postmodernism also highlights the overuse of technology in the contemporary era. It states that we are dependent on technology for our survival and this dependency has caused us psychological problems. These psychological problems are causing depression in the 21st century mankind.

In a nutshell, it can be said that my study aims at highlighting the political crisis that Muslims all over the world are facing due to the revived American essentialism in form of Neo-sincerity, the American Islamophobia and the effects of usage of mobile phones. The results are being carried out by making use of Neo-sincerity and Digitalization; two major tenets of Post-postmodernism. The analysis of the text of the novel *Exit West (2017)* successfully meets the research objective of this study and answers the research questions.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides critical reviews of the key issues of the adopted literary theory; Post-postmodernism. The origin of the theory has been explained along with how it has developed throughout the decades. After exploration of the origin, the adopted theory has been explained thoroughly along with its two major tenets being used in the dissertation; Neo-sincerity and Digitalisation. In addition to that, Mohsin Hamid's general stance has also been mentioned in this chapter.

Post-postmodernism is the result of various political and cultural shifts. Modernism is said to be the oldest linker of Post-postmodernism followed by Post-modernism which later developed into Post-postmodernism. The shift into the tenets of the literary theories was brought forth in order to accommodate the general intellect of the people of that time.

2.1: MODERNISM:

The increasing industrialization and globalization gave birth to a new genre called as Modernism roughly from 1910s to 1960s. It made people come out of their romantic illusions of self and being that were present in the Victorian age which was full of themes of thoughtfulness, morality, self-improvement etc but World War One turned everything upside down. Jonathan Monceaux wrote an article in 2003 explaining the emergence of Modernism in 1920s where he says, "The new values of the society that was referred to as Modernism were at the bottom of the youth movement and challenged the values that the previous generations had" (Monceaux 88).

Modernists lamented the loss of humanity and present the fragmentation as a tragedy. A few major modernist writers that talked about the fall of humankind and mourned over the human incoherence of that era are William Faulkner, Sylvia Plath, F. Scott Fitzgerald, T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf etc. Modernism was based on thinking rationally and logically and it presented a clear and logical view of the world instead of presenting world as something completely positive like it was presented earlier in the Victorian era. As compared to the previous age where the positive side was only pondered upon, Modernism talked about the flaws of the world that is why it did not give a perfect view of the world but shed light on the darker side as well. Modernist perspective stated that we can let past be past but still learn from it. Modernists shared the optimistic view of the world that Victorian Era had. Modernists did not follow the Victorian ideas blindly but they did believe that there are norm and ethics that should be followed in order to live a prosperous life (Maison 3). Modernism believed in breaking the rules that were set in the Victorian age. It was actually a reaction against the Victorian culture that has prevailed through most of the nineteenth century (Network 288).

The horrifying events and aftereffects of the world war were also another reason behind the emergence of Modernism. Kethline Kuiper wrote an article on Modernism in 2016 that stated that "the iniquity of war has made a man question the western society and its norms. Post-war modernist texts exhibits a sense of loss, disillusioned and fragmentation (Kuiper 4). She seems to believe that war is the reason that people broke out of their shells and started comprehending life as it is; rosy as well as thorny.

Modernist writers were once looked upon as teachers because they were believed to be someone who has no loyalty with the past thus shunning old views, a

revolutionary person, a guide and a prophet. Herbert George Wells was one of the famous writer of that time, he has written a number of books with modernist themes. A few of his books are *The Time Machine (1895), Anna Veronica (1909)* and *The undying fire (1909).* Arnold Bennet is yet another modernist writer who himself is the commentator, interpreter and the apologist in his texts and his work is mostly drawn towards realism. His most famous novels are *Clayhanger (1910-1918), The old wives' tale (1908)* and *Riceyman steps (1923).* These works by H. G Wells and Arnold Bennet are a perfect example of breaking free from the Victorian age literature because they talk about the presence of a new era through their realistic themes.

So, we can say that Modernism was a step forward but it was greatly influenced by the Victorian age since it did not completely shun the Victorian ways but found a path somewhere in between, it did make people come out of their illusions and made them realise the realities of a human life but it did not make them practical completely. People still had old views and could not step into a new era with an open mind. This shift in the perspective was seen in social sciences, architecture, fashion, art etc. After the Second World War while Modernism was still reigning the society, Post-Modernism came into being which was a continuation as well as a break from the Modernist stance.

2.2: POST-MODERNISM:

Post-Modernism gained popularity somewhere around 1960s. After the Second World War, the whole world was into a chaotic situation and people were shaken out of their old beliefs that paved way for a new literary theory eradicating the old beliefs completely. People started questioning the rationality that was being posed by Modernism and they dismembered the traditional boundaries that were set for a

human to survive into a society. A strong reaction was generated by the Post-Modernists towards the Victorian religious, political and social views. For the first time, the concept of absolute truth was negated. People finally realized that the concept of trust varies from person to person and they started believing that the world is what we say it is which means that the world is the way we perceive it. This was the reason that the modernists felt lost and experienced alienation, loss and despair and felt no connection with history or institutions. Since people did not believe to have a connection with their forefathers and had started believing into themselves, that brought forth the concept of Individualism and inner strength which was focused upon and it was believed that there is no order to our lives, it's totally unpredictable (Lorcher 9)**.** David Foster Wallace wrote a novel titled as *Infinite Jest (1996)* that talked about the American's pursuit of happiness. This novel answers the essential question of what exactly entertainment is, how entertainment of one person varies from another and how our choices regarding entertainment differs us from other people. The author is trying to prove that entertainment for everyone is different depending on his mental and social situation or in other words we can say that he is propagating individualism.

Post-Modernists looked at life differently, unlike modernists who lamented the loss of humanity, the post-modernists celebrated the change that the technology and the wars had brought into the world. Post-modernists were the believers of the concept of a "Jagged world" (Berna 296) where everything was made up, ambiguous, internally contradictory and indeterminate. Post-modernists not only mixed up beliefs but also mixed up the rules that were set for literature. Post-modernism is about intertextuality, Metafiction, Pastiche, Irony, Scepticism, fragmentation, paranoia etc. In *The Public Burning* (1977) the author has used inaccurate accounts of historical

figures and has made them interact with fictional characters. So, he has proved in his novel that there is no truth to the texts and they are all just made up. *Breakfast of Champions (1973)* written by Kurt Vonnegut is a perfect example of "perfect paranoia is perfect awareness" (King 483). The main character exhibits a violent behaviour once he realizes that he is the only human being on this planets in the midst of millions of robots. Trout proves the absurdity of the life of a Post-modern human being and his ability to survive despite the consequences. *American Psycho (1991)* by Bret Eston Ellis presents a perfect picture of a post-modernist human being. The protagonist of the story talks calmly about his homicidal life and the events being presented in the book, despite being a grave matter, are represented in a very funny way, thus breaking the old traditions of literature by bringing comedy into a horrific subject.

Post-modernism broke human connections with the past and with each other. It propagated Individualism and negated the concept of Absolute Truth. In literature, the writer has no real connection with the reader and the reader is open to analyse the text according to his own context. Post–postmodernism, however, once again tried to rediscover the connection between the reader and the writer.

2.3: POST-POSTMODERNISM:

Post-postmodernism is the latest linker of the chain and has not been completely theorized yet. Theorists are still working on Post-postmodernism to add to the present tenets of the theory.

I intend to use Post-postmodernism as a literary theory to decode the text of the novel *Exit West (2017)*. Nickshep D. Apasangi defines the function of Post-postmodernism by stating that modernist views came out of victim

mentality while the post-postmodernist views are based on actual events taking place around the globe. He believes that we no longer live in a world where we are sceptical towards life in every way. He says,

> Post-Postmodernism rejects postmodernism. They believe that the modernist views and themes came out of a victim mentality that has induced disbelief into the postmodern human. As a result he was sceptical regarding every aspect of human life. (Apasangi 782)

Since Modernism and Post-modernism were greatly affected by the two World Wars, so the post-postmodernists considered their scepticism and pessimism towards life, a result of the heart wrenching wars. Alan Kirby says about Post-postmodernism in his essay The Death of postmodernism and beyond that, "postmodernism is dead and buried. Its place has been taken by a new paradigm of authority and knowledge that is formed in the era of technologies and contemporary social forces" (Kirby 62). Kirby believes that we are no longer living in a war effected society, we have come out of that phase and have entered a new technological era where we are in dire need of a new paradigm of thought. The change in the contemporary time has brought the need for a revised school of thought where one has to put his ambiguities aside and direct himself to his core. The change in views has seeped through literature as well. A book titled as *Literature after Postmodernism: Reconstructive Fantasies* (Huber 48) proves to have shunned the concepts of Post-modernism and the commencement of a new era. Author of this book aims at being creative and have a strong communication skill instead of being subversive like his ancestors which proves the book to be reconstructive. It shuns the old norms

and traditions and focuses on being creative, heard well and understood well. It helps the post-postmodernist human being to put his ambiguous beliefs to rest.

An internet newspaper published an article titled as "Post-postmodernism: where does it end?" (Truong 14) where the author described Post-postmodernism in terms of Meta-modernism. He argues that we are living in a weird ambiguous state where our belief does not fall entirely into Modernism neither Post-modernism because of the time we have stepped into. Technology has changed every part of the human life and has caused ease as well as havoc into the life of the 21st century mankind and this change being originated by technology has made the people stand in a no man's land where he does not belong to the modernist stance neither the post-modernist stance because of his changed social and cultural scenario. The author, however, believes that Post-postmodernism is actually Metamodernism because it is based on Plato's idea of Metaxy. Plato's idea of Metaxy explains the forms of reality. Plato believes that the physical world that we see with our eyes or touch with our hands is the half-seen image of different forms of reality and the world that we see and perceive is actually the reflection of the forms of the world. So if we rely on our senses to know the truth, we would be lost. Plato believed that by understanding the forms, we can reach to true and absolute knowledge (Jardan 257).

Dan Troug says in the journal that, "Metamodernism is the literary movement that is defined by being in a constant state of flux between modernist and postmodernist ideals" (Troug 8). He further says that we are holding both sides of the coin; hopelessness and hope, sincerity and irony, destruction and

reconstruction, and while keeping both sides in mind we are trying to produce something in the fluctuating state that we are in, currently.

Jeffery T Nealon has written a book where he has drawn a family tree of America. He has talked about the old societies of America and the contemporary one that we are living in and has come up with an updated vocabulary that suits America in their recent social, economic and cultural situations. This book is titled as *Post-Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Just-in-Time Capitalism* (Nealon 1884). Kelly Harris says about Nealon's book that it aims at constructing a present time American family tree and it would help us understand the relationships between economic and cultural productions. He further says that American style capitalism is not going to be outdated in near future, so we are required to have an updated conceptual vocabulary so that we can determine our different situations according to the present social and political circumstances (Harris 20).

Since this book focuses on the original American family tree, so all the other people that fall out of this family tree will be labelled as the others. Such is the concept of Neo-sincerity which happens to be the main tenet of Post-postmodernism followed by Digitalization of the current world that plays a vital role in the birth of Neo-sincerity.

2.3.1: NEO-SINCERITY:

Neo-Sincerity is Post-postmodernism's most important tenet that revolves around the idea of self-awareness and awareness of one's context. Neo-sincerity makes one come out of the concept of "America is a melting pot" (Zangwill 19) and shoves him into the concept of "America is a Salad bowl" (Thorton 12). Prior to Post-postmodernism multiculturalism was very much appreciated and celebrated but after

9/11, America decided to put multiculturalism aside and call people by their native sects. So, there was no American Muslim or no African American, a Muslim was a Muslim regardless of where he has resided. Neo-sincerity is basically the realization that Americans are Americans only if they are born Americans. Even those citizens who had been living in America for generations and have completely adopted the American way of life will still not be considered Americans. In order to be called an American, one has to have an American bloodline. Such is the concept of Neo-sincerity given in an article titled as "Death of Irony and a return to sincerity" (Jamesons) written by A D Jamesons who defined Neo-sincerity as,

> The New Sincerity is the other name for the loose strings of related cultural or philosophical movements following the Post-Modernism. It takes the basic tenets of perfomativism (which means that happiness is felt even if it arises from an intentionally constructed situation. That sort of happiness is not false or misleading) and extends the tenets into a transformative way of experiencing life and understanding culture. (Jamesons 26)

Brandan Istenes writes in his blog that, "Neo-sincerity is an art movement which reacts to and builds upon postmodernism. It focuses on and signalling of self-awareness and awareness of context" (Istenes 13). Neo-sincerity states that through irony one does not confront difficulty by beating about the bush and does not say what he means and tries to escape the real discourse that puts him in a confused state of mind where he is not clear about his perspective or ideologies. Neo-sincerity, however, takes a shift from living in the era of irony and scepticism to living in an era where one is aware of himself as well as his surroundings so the human living in the age of Neo-sincerity would be clear about views regarding self and others. According to Aron Colton, "New Sincerity promised stripped-down, undecorated art as a

correction to the elaborate display of everything, experimentalism, and detachment of the 1980s" (Colton 54). Aaron Colton believes that previously everything was displayed elaborately and this type of elaboration has made people move away from the core and focus more onto the elaborations in film making, music and literature to make it catchier. Neo-sincerity has raised up to put an end to the pageantry by presenting a clear view of the ideologies and focusing more on the core of the matter. Neo-sincerity aims at bringing in a youth culture where people will stamp out the hipsters irony that was ruling the world in Post-modernism. Postmodern shows like "The Simpsons" (1989), "Seinfeld" (1998), and "South Park" (1997) were fuelled by irony and cynicism that caused a general disbelief into the people about everything and everyone. Ultimately, these shows concluded in nihilism and to escape that nihilism, people fled towards their own selves, relying more on their own thoughts which brought forth a new era called Post-postmodernism. People started believing in themselves, they relied on their thoughts in order to have a strong foot in life (Gravemaker 208).

Mikhail Epstein wrote an article titled as The Place of Postmodernism in postmodernity where he says,

> The Post-postmodernist now believes in going beyond the postmodernist concept and enters into an era where individual boundaries are given importance and the links with other cultures, societies, religions etc. are broken off. Postmodernist concepts linked one person with another by some means, on the other hand post-postmodernists break off these links and defines a person by what he is, himself. So a post-postmodernist is not dependent on someone else to be known but has his individual standing (Thorton 66).

Samuel Stevens wrote an article titled as “From the ashes of Postmodernism, a New Sincerity?” (Stevens) that propagates the idea of Neo-sincerity in the words “Be who you are and be that well” (Stevens 87). Stevens argues that one should have an individual standing and be proud of it, basically implying that one should not take influences from others so that his own identity does not get mixed up. Adam Kelly has theorized the ideas presented by David Foster Wallace in book *Television and U.S Fiction* (1990). David Foster Wallace predicted the emergence of a new era, he himself was a postmodernist but his beliefs went beyond postmodernism. He believed that through irony, metafiction and word games, we are just trying to mould the reality and through such modernist ideals, one can easily manipulate the actual discourse. Adam Kelly built his work on a critical essay titled as “David Foster Wallace and Neo-sincerity in American Fiction” (Kelly 20) which provided the basic ideas presented by David Foster Wallace. D.F Wallace described the contemporary human condition as a crisis and a chronic disillusionment. He believed that fiction is basically a representation of the human life so he wanted to write such pieces of literature that made man feel a little less alone and his work greatly negated fragmentation of thought, so that one can be psychologically stable. According to Wallace it was very important not to be fragmented in the mind because it makes people go against their basic beliefs and become something or someone else. Wallace was of the opinion that one should strictly stick to his core in order to be mentally and psychologically at peace (Kelly 20).

Jonathan E. Fitzgerald wrote an essay titled as “Sincerity, Not Irony, Is Our Age's Ethos” (Fitzgerald) where he argues that Neo-sincerity is our age’s ethos instead of Irony. Fitzgerald has talked about the contemporary pop culture, he says that media and print media were full of ironic themes but things have taken a turn

since the incident of 9/11. Bravery and posturing once ruled the music industry but these days, one can sense vulnerability and insecurity in the lyrics. Movies and sitcoms have authentic characters who are flawed and are striving to live a good life just like an ordinary American. Literary authors like Johnathan Franzon, Zadie Smith and Michael Chibon have written books with the themes of morality. The entire pop culture spectrum puts an emphasis on spirituality, relationships, environment and the country. In other words, a drift is being made from ironism to actualism and that drift brings forth the ideologies of Neo-sincerity.

Cristy Wampole, a Ph.D. Doctor, wrote an article named as "How to Live without Irony" (Wampole 27) where she said that the whole world is living in an ironic state. The dismembered ones who are actually living their lives are either young children, mentally disabled people or the old ones. Wampole calls irony as the most self-defensive mode that we use to dodge our responsibilities and by the use of irony, we try to hide ourselves in public. In this age, directness has become unbearable for everyone. Wampole believes that such an ironic life poses political and social risks and if we did not come out of it, we will fall prey to the commercial and social entities that would be more than happy to shape our minds, that way we will lose our own identities and become what they want us to become.

The western Neo-sincerity stresses anti-culturalism in the west thus negating their previous concepts of "Melting Pot" and "Salad Bowl". It focuses on the idea that Americans are only American when they are born in America and have an all American kinship and the minority groups, like the Muslims, will be considered the others and will be treated accordingly. This reorientation, termed as Neo-sincerity, is being foregrounded, contrary to the postmodernist suspension of it, by the contemporary cultural, critical theorists and intelligentsia (Khan 19).

Such ideologies of Neo-sincerity are very much prevalent in the text of *Exit West* (2017) which will be analysed, with the help of literary theory of Post-postmodernism, in this research.

2.3.2: DIGITALIZATION:

Digitalisation is a new domain that has engulfed the entire world one way or another. It has emerged in early in 1950s and had a bounce in 1990s due to the advent of Web. Digitalisation is an important tenet of Post-postmodernism since it drives our thoughts and actions to some extent. Although the focal point of my dissertation is Neo-Sincerity, Digitalisation, however, forms the minor part of the dissertation. Digitalization basically means turning information into bits and bytes and feeding it to computers. Through the computers, the whole world can have access to that particular information that is how digitalization has turned the world into a global village. The human of 21st century cannot imagine living without a computer. Apparently computers have made our lives way easier but they happen to have quite disastrous effects have on our overall lives when it comes to health, familial bonds and other human relationships. An article titled as "Reflecting on the Impact of Digitization" (Scriffignano 52) puts emphasis on the drastic effects of digitalization on the mankind. He says that computers are changing humanity in a sense that "children not spending enough time with physical activities, the loss of intimacy in communication, and the erosion of privacy" (Scriffignano 52). He has highlighted the unhealthy attitude of the children who have stopped going outside to play, instead they are playing virtual games on the computers that not only physically weakens them by also affect their eye sight. He also says that, "some of the greatest minds such as Stephen Hawking have warned that AI could actually effectuate an end to mankind if not properly managed" (Scriffignano 52). Dr Anthony Scriffignano seems to be worried

for the future of the mankind that is being overpowered by computers by stating that our lives are being dictated by computers these days. For example, if we need to know something we would look it up over internet and the answer would be the final words for us because we would believe it unquestioningly, similarly if we need to get to some place, we will follow Google map without thinking twice. Our lives have become computer-generated to such an extent that we end our day by putting mobile phone aside and start our day by picking it up again. In this age, one cannot simply imagine losing his mobile phone because he will be lost completely since he has all his schedules, contacts, messages etc stored in his mobile phone. Steven Hawking fears that someday this technology will put an end to mankind if we do not properly manage the use of technology in our lives.

The negative side of digitalization has been shown in an article written by Erin Kim who says that our mobile phones might be very important and useful to our lives but they are isolating us from who we actually are. He says that, "we are ignoring our finiteness, we are forgetting the joy of embodiment, we are losing interest in the gathered church, and that we are growing careless with our words" (Kim 207). He believes that by the usage of cell phones, we ignore everything that surrounds us actually and focus on things that surrounds us virtually and these devices are pushing us away from the joys that comes with actually doing certain activities. Erin Kim has also mentioned his concern regarding the language that is being used by the new generation. He seems to imply that we have started using foul language in our daily lives thus we are less civilized and less sophisticated as compared to our older generations.

We live in a virtual world that has taken away all the actual things out of our lives. We have found a way to turn every actual activity into virtual one e.g. games,

meetings, business deals etc. This virtual world is the death of actual world which is not good for our mental as well as physical health. If we do not realise the impact of mobile phones on our lives soon enough, we will be doomed just as Steven Hawking had anticipated.

2.4: MOHSIN HAMID:

Mohsin Hamid is a well-known British Pakistani author who has written some flawless pieces of fiction. Mohsin Hamid stands in the category of Famous Authors of Pakistan. The website titled as Famous Authors says, "He is a prominent Pakistani novelist known for his ingeniously crafted literary works, such as *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* and *Moth Smoke*. Mohsin Hamid presents different perspectives in his books, he talks about life in Middle East as well as life in West so one can make a comparison. His characters are apparently very ordinary but are constructed in such a way that one can relate himself with the character, his themes are also very relatable to our daily lives. He says that he is not a representative of Pakistan but just an example that Pakistanis are different from each other and one can sense this concept in his fiction clearly.

Zain R Main, a graduate of University of Pennsylvania, published an article titled as "Willing representatives: Mohsin Hamid and Pakistani literature abroad" (Main 21) where he argues that all of Hamid's novels are concerned with how Middle East is being treated by the West and what are the drastic effects of this mistreatment on the minds of Pakistanis. Through his texts, he is indirectly trying to pass on a message to America. Mohsin Hamid himself believes that the Americans need to play a more active role in ensuring that what the United States does abroad is not merely in keeping with a foreign policy elite's sense of realpolitik but also with the American

public's sense of American values. Asking Americans to educate themselves, he also tries to educate Pakistanis regarding the general view that the Pakistanis hold against United States. Dr Masood Ashraf Raja published an article under the title "The Pakistani English Novel: The Burden of Representation and the Horizon of Expectations" (Raja 8) where he states that it's very easy, if you come from a place like Pakistan, to imagine that there's a narrative of American aggression towards the place that you come from. But that, in itself, is just a political view. He further believes that we also hold a sceptical view of US because of the envy we feel towards the richest country in the world. So, it is not just the America who has revived Neo-sincerity but the Pakistanis as well. According to Mohsin Hamid it has erupted out of jealousy towards the powerful country. He says that part of the reason people abroad resent the United States is something Americans can do very little about: envy. The richest, most powerful country in the world attracts the jealousy of others in much the same way that the richest, most powerful man in a small town attracts the jealousy of others.

Exit West is the latest and most powerful narrative that Mohsin Hamid came up with in March, 2017. Buzzfeed, Time magazine and The Washington Post has claimed it as "Most Anticipated Book" because the plot is very much relevant to today's global issue (Tew 27). One can sense a constant fight between the natives and the immigrants of the country within the text of the novel. Saeed and Nadia, a Muslim couple, is constantly running from one city to another in order to seek refuge but they are not accepted anywhere because they are the non-Americans labelled as the others. The negation of the concept of America being a salad bowl and a melting pot is very much prevailing in the text because one can clearly sense the hardships being faced by immigrants in a foreign land due to natives' behaviours in the text of the novel.

Katie Crisco wrote an article about Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* (2017) where she says that though the novels presents a bleak picture of lost homeland but it also "fills us up with a sense of hope that the world is going to know peace, at one time or another" (Crisco 18). She also mentioned that this novel helped her understand that people are internally the same, though they might be coming from different backgrounds but deep down they are the same human beings; having same yearnings, same needs, same passions. She seems to be saying that Americans are capable of bloodshed just as any other tribe.

Exit West was published on 7th March, 2017. Being recently published, it has not really been worked upon yet. Several people have worked on Mohsin Hamid though, because he has written some exemplary texts prior to *Exit West*. Since I intend to break this text down by making use of the literary theory Post-postmodernism and for that, the theory will have to be partitioned first. Post-postmodernism is relatively a new theory that is still under synthesis and is the latest linker of the chain of Modernism. In a nutshell, Mohsin Hamid's latest novel *Exit West (2017)* forms the foundation for this research. The text of the novel will be analysed using two major tenets of Post-postmodernism; Neo-sincerity and Digitalization which will form the core of the research.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THERORATICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter provides my research with the conceptual foundation on which the argument is being structured. It basically provides an insight of how the research is being carried out and what approaches are being used to analyse the text of the novel *Exit West (2017).* Research methodology is explained at the beginning of the chapter that would help a reader in critically evaluating the validity and overall reliability of the study. Under the heading of Theoretical Framework, a proper structure is being constructed which first explains the emergence of the selected theory and a detailed explanation its two major tenets being used in my research. The framework will help in the understanding of the adopted theory, validation the analysis and clarification of the researcher's stance.

3.1: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Research methodology is the study of the methods through which the knowledge being presented in the dissertation is acquired. The researcher has used a qualitative research approach in order to critically analyse the text of the novel *Exit West (2017).* The research is self-exploratory that takes on a text-based mode of analysis. It can also be labelled as a textual research because the base of the analysis has been formed by the quotes extracted from the text of the novel *Exit West (2017).* The text of the novel *Exit West (2017)* describes the circumstances of Muslims living in America and Britain and these circumstances from the text are used in order to highlight the American essentialist stance of Neo-sincerity by making use of the latest

literary theory of Post-postmodernism. So, the dissertation is formed by exploring the text of the novel *Exit West (2017)* through the lens of literary theory of Post-postmodernism.

3.2: THEORATICAL FRAMEWORK:

Post-postmodernism is among the current critical and cultural theories that are in the process of evolution due to their recent emergence on the intellectual scenario. The emergence of Post-postmodernist wave is triggered by the cultural and economic shifts. That cultural has come to surface after the extreme events of 9/11 and the global pessimism that was precipitated by these events producing religious fundamentalism and environmental deterioration around the globe. This idea of increasingly desperate relentless progress of such fundamentalism is quite prevalent in the recent works of Terry Eagleton; a theorist, critic and public intellectual. Eagleton wrote a book titled as *Sweet Violence: The Idea of the Tragic* (2002) where he explores the idea of tragedy from its origin to the present world while taking the psychological, religious and socio-political implications into consideration. Eagleton wrote a book *Holly Terror* (2005) that investigates the core of terrorism. He has traced a genealogy of terrorism by describing its role in societies throughout the history and has, thus, proves that terrorism is not limited to a particular sect but is actually a human instinct. His recent works provides a cultural critique that is largely based on violence, evil, terror and an ever-impending global crisis that needs to be resolved in time before it gets too late.

Jeffrey T. Nealon wrote a book titled as *Post-Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Just-in-Time Capitalism* (Nealon) where he argues that American-style capitalism has taken over the entire world and America is making a capitalistic

economic and cultural shift in the entire world. Nealon believes that we are required to have "an updated conceptual vocabulary for diagnosing and responding to our changed situation" (Nealon 68). Nealon is of the view that a new literary theory is in dire need to be constructed according to the shift in world politics so that one can analyse the grand narratives in that special lens.

According to Dan Troug, an Asian-American aspiring writer, we are living in an ambiguous sate of art where we are inclined partially towards modernism and post-modernism and shunning their tenets at the same time that leaves us in no man's land so we do not belong to modernism or post-modernism. He further argues that this state of art brings us into a new sphere known as Metamodernism. He explains post-postmodernism in terms of Metamodernism by saying that we are holding both ends, we do not want to let go of hope, yet we are hopeless and we want to embrace sincerity yet we long for irony. According to the author we are "in a constant state of flux between modernist and postmodernist ideals" (Troug 80).

The research intends to use this new theory that has emerged because of the world's political shift. Applying a latest theory onto the text of a latest novel will highlight the contemporary problems of our era. Although Post-postmodernism is multi-dimensional but the researcher has only taken two main tenets of the theory; Neo-sincerity and digitalization. Neo-sincerity is the major part of the analysis and the ideologies of neo-sincerity of the west are causing inconvenience for every nation that is labelled as others by America. This inconvenience is being explored through the characters of the novel; Saeed and Nadia and the hardships that these two characters had to suffer throughout the novel are a result of western neo-sincerity. Digitalization, on the other hand, forms minor part of the analysis focusing mainly on a problem that is being faced by the entire mankind regardless of their cast or creed;

dependency on technology. The minor part of analysis explicates the negative effects of mobile phone over usage. Together, Neo-sincerity and Digitalization form the structure on which the analysis is being carried out.

3.2.1: NEO-SINCERITY:

Neo-sincerity is a trend in music, arts, literature, aesthetics etc. that aligns itself with the new literary theory being emerged in 1990s and is generally defined as a reaction against post-postmodernism that focuses entirely on self-awareness and awareness of 21st century human being's situational context. David Foster Wallace is said to be the first author who has brought up this subject, he wrote an essay titled as "E Unibus Pluram: Television and the Literature of the USA" (D. F. Wallace). His essay first present the idea of neo-sincerity which was later built upon by Adam Kelly who presented this idea in his book titled as *David Foster Wallace and the New Sincerity in American Fiction* (Kelly 48). A shift was seen in the American fiction and this shift exhibited a certain type of self-awareness. America that was once host country for the entire world was now pushing the others away. America used to call its nation a melting pot and a salad bowl but that is not the case in the contemporary era especially after 9/11. An essay published in The Journal of Aesthetics and Culture by Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker labels the shift towards neo-sincerity as "swing towards fanaticism" (Akker 83). Pheng Cheah adds up to the concept given by Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker in his book *Spectral Nationality* (2003) by saying that, "The millennium's end is marked (and marred) by an endless catalogue of fanaticist intolerance, ethnic violence, and even genocidal destruction, which are widely regarded as extreme expressions of nationalism" (Cheah 1). The notion of neo-sincerity was previously seen in their fiction only, but now it can be seen in the general American attitude as well.

In the text of Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*, once can sense the presence of new-sincerest ideals very clearly. The story revolves around a Muslim couple who are constantly seen suffering in America and Britain just because they are Muslims. The west is discriminating Muslims greatly and American neo-sincerity seems to be responsible for the ill-treatment that Muslims receive in the west. An article was published in "The Guardian" (Pruchnie 55) by Ben Pruchnie who has talked about the marginalisation of the Muslims. He says, "Jihadi terrorism is a phenomenon in the west. That creates two dangers – the alienation of Muslim citizens, and then, as a consequence, the failure of a multicultural society to knit together" (Pruchnie 55). All the Muslims who had been living in west has to face problems because of the misconception of Jihad. The author says that as long as this concept of jihad based terrorism is not cleared, Muslims will continue to face discrimination. He seems to be suggesting that it should be made clear that terrorism should not be aligned with Islam because Islam has nothing to do with it. Every human being has a demon living inside him that can come out anywhere anytime regardless of his cast, nationality or religion. An article has been published titled as "From 9/11 to hate groups: The economic marginalisation of the West's Muslims" (Werleman 64) by Cj Werleman where he has talked about the economic marginalisation of the British Muslims due to the Islamophobia of the British. The author describes the poor condition of the British Muslims in the following words, "British Muslims live in the poorest neighbourhoods, earn the lowest incomes, have less access to higher education, and experience disproportionate levels of discrimination" (Werleman 64). The author of this particular article also mentions that a narrative has been constructed that portrays Muslims as terrorists, declares Muslims as the dangerous others without any solid proof which has helped in the construction of Anti-Burqa laws in many western

countries. West justifies the anti-burqa laws by saying that they are "necessary to protect public safety, defend Western values or encourage migrants to assimilate into their new societies" (Stack 15) but the Muslim community looks at the other side of the picture because they consider hijab and burqa as a religious obligation that should not be questioned by the government and if it is questioned, then that means Muslims are being discriminated because when religions have equal status, they are free to follow their own rules and regulations.

World politics took a sharp turn when Donald Trump came up with a sturdy stance on Muslims living in the US. In his election campaign, he called for a temporary ban on all Muslims trying to get into the country and Muslims were being held responsible for terrorism all around the world. Donald Trump put a ban on immigrants and refugees coming from Iran, Yemen, Somalia, Libya, North Korea, Syria and Venezuela. Moreover, Muslims are said to be given special identity cards so the government can track their each and every movement. Muslims living in America protested against it but their efforts went in vain because the American chief justice John Roberts clearly stated "that Trump's travel restriction fell squarely within the president's authority" (Higins 19). Muslims living in America were greatly affected by this law. Abrar Omeish, is a Muslim, belonging to Libya who was getting married in America and due to the travel ban, her entire family could not attend the wedding, she exhibits her disappointment in the following words, "It's like we have to live as second-class citizens. We're not allowed to access our families just because we happen to be from a certain background, because we're Muslim" (Laughland 14). Linda Sarsour is a Palestinian Muslim-American activist who stood up against Trump's Muslim travel ban because she believes that Muslims are longing to see their family and friends living abroad and they cannot seem to reach them because of the

travel ban. Furthermore, the refugees coming to America are already leaving their homes and families, they should not be treated like a burden or not allowed to enter the country because they did not leave their own land willingly; they were forced to leave because of the ongoing war. She explains the plight of American Muslim in the following words,

> I know Yemeni-American fathers who are longing to see their children but are in visa limbo in countries like Ethiopia, Egypt and Djibouti. Syrian refugees — who have already suffered in the journey to leave their homes — have been further separated from half of their families because of the ban (Sarsour 6).

Muslims were very much effected by the policy and felt greatly discriminated in comparison to the rest of the world. The refugee and immigrant crisis that has been pointed out by the author can be seen in the text of the novel as well.The American Muslims are being constantly watched by the government. Alia Malik wrote an article titled as "The FBI's 'Vulgar Betrayal' of Muslim Americans" (Malik 1) where she narrates the story of a girl who was woken up in the middle of the night by shining lights outside her window and those lights were being shone by FBI agents who were on surveillance duty. The community that she lives in had almost 200 Muslim families living together peacefully. The author says, "There were the unknown cars that sat for hours outside their houses; men who did not appear to be in need going through their trash cans; and odd clicking sounds and static on the line when residents spoke on the phone" (Malik 1). She said that the Muslim Americans knew that it was the government's surveillance but they could not do anything about it. The author says that fear, isolation and shame started maturating in that community and it effected the Muslims psychologically. The constant surveillance caused a paranoia in the Muslim society and this type of paranoiac Muslim society in America has been

explored in a documentary titled as “the feeling of being watched” (Boundaoui 8) that sheds light on the drastic effects of surveillance on the American Muslim community.

American Muslims who once considered themselves free are now being watched with a doubtful eye, their life in America is being greatly overshadowed by Islamophobia due to which they face multiple problems in their daily lives. They are discriminated, ill-treated and spied upon and these suffering are quite evident in the text of the novel. The analysis of the dissertation take excerpts from the text of the novel *Exit West* and apply the theoretical approaches, mentioned above, on the text in order to produce desired results.

3.2.2: DIGITALIZATION:

Although digitalisation is the minor part of the research but it holds its own importance. The elements of digitalisation can be seen very clearly in the text of the novel *Exit West.* Digitalization is generally described as “the process to convert data into digital formats” (Okeke 34). Digitalization has revolutionised our era to such an extent that we are now completely dependent on digital technologies. One of the most fatal digital gadget that has reformed our lives is cell phone. The writer has time and again mentioned the effects of cell phone on human life through the characters of Saeed and Nadia in the text of the novel. Apart from cell phone, the author has also mentioned the effects of media on the entire world. Mobile phones and televisions have brought the entire world together, under one roof by delivering same messages throughout the planet at the same time which has benefitted some and destroyed others.

A number of people around the world are currently suffering from Mobile Phone Overuse without even realizing their addiction. According to the World Health

Organisation excessive use of mobile phones causes “dependence syndrome” (Radesky 5). In Britain, 10 percent of teenagers are suffering from Mobile overuse while almost 40 percent of people are effected by mobile phones in India. Technology might have made our lives easier but it has also caused social stress. We see things we cannot have in our lives, we see photo shopped pictures of perfect bodies that make us hate ourselves, and we watch people having rich lifestyles and posting their every move and compare our own lives with them. Whatever shown on the internet does not have to be true, ninety percent of the online material is made up to make one feel bad about his current state, this wears one down psychologically and is the main reason behind the existence of discontentment in the human of 21st century.

Television is another technological disaster that has affected our perception to a great extent. We are not shown reality but a version of reality. Commonly people accept whatever they see on television, no one tries to investigate the matter themselves and the information being given out by television then forms the core for general public perception regarding an issue. By believing into those news casters, we actually believe into what is being fed to us. We are shown one side of the coin while the other side is kept in dark so that media can meet its own agenda by narrating news in their lens (Archon 9). Television is also held responsible for human’s violent behaviour, it is said that the more television one watches, the more violent he gets. We are shown worldly material that we cannot have in our real lives and this causes a certain type of psychological turmoil that’s responsible for damaging one’s mental health (Neilson 18).

Though digitalization has made our lives easier but it has also caused physical and mental problems. Mohsin Hamid has shed light on current social paranoia caused by technology in the text of *Exit West (2017).* The author has clearly pointed out the

characters suffering from dependency syndrome and the children of the third world countries being affected psychologically by the exposure of television.

The references to certain actual events taking place around the globe are confirming the effects of western Neo-sincerity on Muslims in general. The events taken from a number of books and articles are a living example of the treatment being given to Muslims in the west along with the effects of digitalization on mankind, in general. The framework comprises of a structure that backs up the major part of analysis, neo-sincerity, and the minor part, digitalisation, of the research. Quotes taken from the text of the novel aligns the story with the facts being stated in this chapter. Thus, Neo-sincerity and Digitalization, two major tenets of post-postmodernism, can be seen as the dominant factors in the text of the novel.

CHAPTER IV

POST-POSTMODERNISM IN MOHSIN HAMID'S *EXIT WEST*

This chapter has explored and explained the two main tenets of the literary theory of Post-postmodernism. The text of the novel largely comprises of the ideologies of western Neo-sincerity that forms the major part of the analysis while Digitalisation forms the minor part. The Muslim characters of the novel can clearly be seen as a prey to the stance of western Neo-sincerity. In *Exit West,* the major characters are being mistreated on the basis on their religion and nationality that has labelled them as others in Unites States of America. The existence of discrimination against the Muslim characters is being backed up by references taken from the text of the novel. The major part of the analysis is being followed by another important issue that has overwhelmed the contemporary human being; the issue of digitalisation of the world. These two tenets of literary theory of Post-postmodernism constructs the core of the analysis with the help of the instances given in the book *Exit West (2017).*

4.1: NEO-SINCERITY:

Neo-sincerity is said to be the essentialist stance of the west where they believe that they are standing against all the non-Americans, thus regarding those as "others" who does not belong to the American family tree and does not have pure American blood. This tenet of Post-postmodernism is the major part of the study. The presence of western Neo-sincerity is being explained with the help of excerpts from the text of the novel *Exit West* and this explanation is being carried out on four levels. The first level explains the attitude of the host country towards the non-Americans; Britain and America, second level explains the attitude of the non-Americans; the Muslims and other minority groups, third level explains the author's point of view

regarding the whole narrative and the fourth and the last level explains the negative effects of digitalisation on the characters of the novel. This four-levelled analysis aims at answering the research questions and meeting the research objectives successfully.

4.1.1: RESPONSE OF THE HOST:

The very first page of the novel foregrounds the western attitude towards the east. The fact that West has feigned unity is mentioned in the very first page of the novel where the author writes that the students had "an evening class on corporate identity" (1). The foreign students were taught about an identity that they could share with the natives; this notion implies that they were not considered American in the first place. This line emphasizes the concept of Salad Bowl that is yet to be negated later in the novel. Having promoted unity in the first page of the novel, western world acted otherwise later in the novel.

Right after promoting unity, the text revealed Neo-sincerity of the Americans. The text of the novel clearly stated that the west is tired of having outsiders in their homeland in the following words, "refugees had occupied many of the open places in the city, pitching tents between roads, erecting lean-tos next to houses and trying to recreate the rhythms of a normal life" (23). Refugees, who clearly are the others, are living their lives in tents and are not only made to live on streets but are also mentioned in a way that makes one realise that they are polluting the overall environment of the neighbourhood. The refugees who should have been given food, shelter and medical care are being treated as a burden. The unrest being caused in the city by the presence of the refugees has also been described by the author in the text. According to the author the western world seems to be very much disturbed by families living "on sheet of plastic, propped up with branches and a few chipped

bricks" (23). The country that once welcomed those immigrants now wants to get rid of them somehow because Americans think that refugees are causing major unrest in the society so, instead of providing them with proper shelter and health care, they are complaining about their presence.

Throughout the text, west is never fair towards the immigrants. We are told about a man living in Tokyo, who had had a Half-Filipino boy in his class "whom he had beaten often, once so badly that he would have been expelled, had someone been willing to say who has done it." (28). This incident took place at a school. If American children are fuelled up with hatred for the others on school levels, one cannot expect the grownups to exhibit any kind of empathy. One American boy had beaten up a half-Filipino boy and the whole American school kept quiet about it, no one stood up for the effected one because he was not true American blood. Through this incident, mentioned in the book, we are clearly told about the attitude of the host nation towards the immigrant residing in the west. Immigrants are being unfair to, and no one is willing to help them out and the entire host majority seems to be standing in unity against the immigrant minority.

The militants would enter one's house without permission, search thoroughly and take whatever they need or desire, no one could stand up against them or not let them search their houses. People had no privacy even inside their houses and they were always in fear of being raided and blamed without having done any harm. Militants were always looking for a suspect and whoever they suspected a threat or if someone resisted their entry, they would be murdered mercilessly and the militants would not be interrogated for that murder. Suspected people would not go through a proper trial and their fate will fall in the hands of the militants. This injustice was due on the people of a particular sect that the militants had thought to be the threat and

that particular sect was clearly the Easterners. The writer says, “The night 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” (79) . The relationship that exists between the citizens and the militants in the text of the novel is quite similar to the relationship of Muslims living in the west with the natives of the country. Natives hold a certain power like the militants and the foreigners are helpless like the citizens. This analogy proves that west is very much keen on pushing the foreigners out of their territory by unfair means.

After being hit by the western Neo-sincerity, the West seems to be very barbaric towards the non-Americans and their barbarous attitude has made the author question their innate humanity. The writer narrates such an incident that represents the barbarism that the Americans has recently taken in. He says, “Once he stood there and he saw young boys playing with football, but then he realized they were young men playing with head of a human being, with hair and beard. He wanted to believe that he was mistaken but their expressions left him in little doubt of the truth” (82). These lines emphasizes the American inhuman attitude and the fact that the boys played football on a human head explains the American inner barbarian attitude that has engulfed the entire non-American sect that resided in America.

America was keeping a close eye on the immigrants. Firstly, Americans were shoving the immigrants out of their country; secondly they were keeping close tabs on the immigrants who were leaving America. America not only wanted them gone, they also wanted them gone their way, under their military surveillance, and a slightest mistake of the non-Americans on their way out of America could cost them their lives. The writer has talked about a dark-skinned family that was on a move and was observed from every angle with the help of drones. The writer says, “A small quad

copter was hovering fifty meters above them now, too quiet to be heard, relying its feed to a central monitoring system" (87). West seems to be making use of the technological means to track every movement of the non-Americans and punished them whenever needed or desired. Nadia and Saeed faced the same fate as that family on the move. The writer narrates that, "as they stepped outside, they could be seen by the lenses peering down on their city from sky and from space and by the eyes of militants and informers who might by anyone, anywhere" (89) . Americans were keeping a close eye on the non-Americans, watching their every move and trying to make out their intentions.

In every community, there exist a small number of people who are not conformists. There were a number of American who felt sorry for the immigrants and were willing to let them stay in America. Since the American majority did not want it so they tried to spread hatred towards the immigrants into the minds on those people by pulling off a faux shooting so that it would provoke a reaction into those who did not see the easterners as a threat to their nation. In Vienne (a town in south central France) the militants killed unarmed people so that the people of the town would blame the unrest of the presence of the immigrants. The writer says that by shooting the French people, the militants "had perhaps hoped to provoke a reaction against migrants from their own part of the world, who had been pouring into Vienna" (104). Americans first made the easterners exit their land and then made their lives a living hell in other countries as well so that other countries would also join hands with America in marginalising the East completely.

While staying at Mykonos Island, the immigrants were strictly told not to mingle with the natives of the island. The writer says, "Nadia had never been to the old town, for it was off limits to migrants at night, and they were strongly discouraged

from going there even in the day" (113). A fine line was drawn between the migrants and the natives of Mykonos. Migrants were located on a beach and were not allowed to go to centre of the island but they were allowed to stay on the peripherals and trade goods with the natives. The trade would benefit America because Americans would buy things from the immigrants on a very low price because they knew the terms and conditions of the immigrants and immigrants, on the other hand, were in dire need of money and other goods, so they had no option but to yield to whatever an American is paying. This way Americans were getting more for paying less. Island of Mykonos was another America for Saeed and Nadia. Americans had pushed them into a corner and forced them to leave; similarly the people of Mykonos had pushed them to the beach and will force them to flee Mykonos as well because it's not a place where they can reside for long.

Saeed and Nadia were residing in a worker camp in London. They were promised forty meters of land and accessibility to all the basic necessities of life. They laboured day and night to brighten up their future but all their hard work went in vain because the natives were not accepting refugees even if they worked for them. Writer says that, "As usual, the disasters attracted the most outside interest, such as nativist raid that disabled machinery or destroyed dwelling units near completion or resulted in severe beatings of some workers who had stayed too far from camp" (175). Finding a way to survive peacefully in parallel to westerners was becoming harder by every passing day. Saeed and Nadia had, however, planned to settle down once they were given a piece of land and dreamt to have a house where they can reside happily but their fate had decided otherwise. Saeed and Nadia faced hardships in London due to which they decided to flee London in order to search for better living circumstances.

Throughout the novel, Saeed and Nadia had to suffer on the basis of their religion. One can clearly sense the injustice being carried out by the west in treatment of the Muslims. Saeed and Nadia are being doubted for no reason, forced to keep a low profile because they know that they will be caught and would not be provided any sort of justice. They were aware of the fact that their every move is being watched closely, their houses are being raided, they are not given any privacy due to which they were always clutched by the fear of being killed without a reason. They are forced to move from one place to another, they are made to work day and night without being paid accordingly or as promised, their families and friends are killed and they are constantly seen to be running throughout the text of the novel, unable to find peace anywhere. They are unable to find a place where they can live without being discriminated, looted or killed on the basis on their religion and sect. This barbaric attitude towards the Muslims characters shows the dark side of the western society. The host countries like Britain and America, who were once Muslim friendly, have now turned into anti-Muslim societies.

4.1.2: IMMIGRANT REACTION:

The immigrants in America seem to be tired of the ill-treatment that they endure on daily basis because of their religion. They seems to be aware of the fact that they will be immigrants no matter what, as a result they had decided to stick to their own traditions and way of life instead of blending into the American culture to please them. In order to differentiate themselves from the natives through their outlook, “they did it within certain bounds of course, so these choices meant something” (1). Dressing up differently from the natives exhibits a certain type of rebellious attitude towards the west, an attitude of not completely blending in. It also refers to the ideals

of neo-sincerity where one strictly sticks his core instead of getting influenced by others.

Saeed was looking at the night time sky through his eye piece and he saw a different Mars. “The Mars it showed was more detailed; it was a Mars from another moment, a bygone Mars, fixed in the memory by the application’s creator” (15). This line explains the mental situation of the immigrants very clearly. Just like Saeed was shown another Mars instead of the real one, the immigrants were shown the positive side of west only and this was the reason that they decided to take refuge in the west. They were told that the west does not discriminate, it treats everyone equally, the immigrants had thought of finding peace and love in the west. They expected western countries to welcome them with open arms but they had to encounter an opposite situation which shook them out of their old beliefs. Just like the fixated Mars, this idea of west being welcoming and helpful was fixated into the minds of the immigrants. Since there is only one Mars and the Mars that Saeed saw was just an illusion, similarly America being a host country anymore is an illusion being shattered by the ideologies of western neo-sincerity.

Nadia, like Saeed, seems to be an ill fitted immigrant as well. We are told that Nadia’s favourite subject was Arts but she was in school more for the “rote memorization” (17) instead of doing what actually made her happy. She went to the school but instead of focussing on what was being taught, she would doodle along the margins of the page and hide it from the teachers so she does not get scolded. She was ill suited for the education she was receiving at school but she pursued it anyway. Her childhood event given in the text of *Exit West* is closely linked to her current presence in the West in a sense that she is just as ill-suited in the west as she was in her school. She is studying in the West but she does not particularly like it, given that her attitude

towards Western men is not welcoming or friendly rendering her as a slightly impolite being. In addition to that, she wears a black robe to keep the western world at an arm's length. The writer explains her robe-wearing attitude in the following words, "then put on her robe, ready to resist the claims and expectations of the world" (45). She wore the robe to discourage American men from approaching her and not to meet the expectations of the western society. Her black robe also emphasizes the presence of neo-sincerity in Nadia's character to some extent because she tried to differentiate herself from rest of the girls through a black robe.

While talking about her social media account, the writer says that she tries to keep low profile and does not leave any trace of where and what she had been surfing because she is afraid that someone might track her interests down and it might cause problems for her, this element reinforces the idea of self-protection. The writer calls her social media surfing as "the online equivalents of her black robes" (37). In addition to Nadia, who being a Muslim woman, is double marginalised, Saeed also keeps a low profile. The book states while talking about Saeed that, "He drove to Nadia's instead of riding his scooter, feeling somehow less exposed in a closed vehicle" (41). When going out of their houses, Saeed and Nadia had to somehow hide themselves into the crowd so that they would not attract any sort of attention. The writer says, "they stayed in the margins of the roads, in the shadows as much as possible, trying not to be seen while trying not to look like they were trying not to be seen" (83). They could not afford to have called suspicion upon themselves or even attraction and they were aware that if anyone noticed them, they will be interrogated and might fall prey to the militants' wrath for no apparent reason.

Nadia also "learned how to dress for self-protection and always to trust her instincts about situations to avoid or exit immediately" (19). One learns self-

protection only when one feels the need for it or if he faces smaller incidents in daily life which suggests the possibility of a bigger problem. Nadia must have felt some kind of threat in the society, so she learned to protect herself in case she encounters a situation that calls for self-protection. Nadia's need to protect herself from everyone around her draws a distinction between the two nations. A western woman might not feel the urge to protect herself because she knows that the government policies are out there to protect her but same is not the case with Nadia only because she is a Muslim.

Nadia's posture reveals that she was a double minority in the West. Firstly, she was a woman, who had to learn self-protection needed in case of emergency and secondly, she was a Muslim woman in a non-Muslim state. The writer describes her posture in the following words, "posture was still hunched over as it had been when she was a schoolgirl" (19). Her double minority status had caused a hunched over posture. She could have been sitting straight up, confidently but she was not because she could not afford to.

Nadia has always felt herself unsafe in the foreign land. During the conflict between the government and the military, the city was being bombed every now and then. Nadia did not go underground to avoid being bombed but she, "bolted her door and laboriously pushed her sofa against it so that it was barricaded from within" (63). The reason that she had to bolt her door and barricade it with a sofa exhibits her inner fear of being weak, lonely and vulnerable in a city where non-Muslims would not miss a chance to destroy the Muslim minority because they consider them a threat to their peace. Americans had gone inhumane trying to protect their country from the so called enemies. Innocent young students were brainwashed into thinking that Muslims are their enemies and they are responsible for everything that goes wrong in the American society. Saeed's mother was a school teacher and used to teach young

children, she had a student who was once a shy young boy with a quick mind for mathematics. After a few years she saw that boy riding in a pickup truck while shooting in a direction using his machine gun. Saeed's mother was quite surprised and shocked because she could not believe that a shy student who used to be brilliant at mathematics could be capable of such barbarous attitude. That boy had turned from a harmless shy young boy into a killer. Such are the consequences of propagation of Islamophobia in the world.

Nadia and Saeed were told to flee the war-stricken city through special doors that would take them to a peaceful land but they did not believe it, they discussed the current state of matter with each other and decided to stay, which they doubted later. The text of the novel says, "but every morning, when she woke up, Nadia looked over at her front door and at the doors to her bathroom, Saeed did much the same" (70). This shows the confusion they had in their minds, they tried to reassure themselves but had finally realised that they are not Americans and will always be outsiders. They also expected to be attacked from anywhere, either the front or the back, fear had gripped them tight and they could not even shake it off in their private bedroom which they considered comparatively safer. This was not the case with only Saeed and Nadia, almost every other immigrant was suffering from the fear of being attacked or killed. That is why people doubted the doors of their rooms and expected militants to jump out of them anytime and anywhere. The text of the novel says, "but most people began to gaze at their doors a little differently nonetheless" (70). It was not the doors that were doubted, but the people entering and exiting those doors. Previously the Muslims looked hopefully at the doors knowing that they are safe but they had started doubting the doors knowing that their presence is worthless.

Saeed's mother and Nadia were a little hopeful at the beginning, they were hoping that things will go back to normal after the unrest subsides. That is why they kept telling themselves that "nothing had changed and the city had seen similar crisis before" (49). Although they apparently said that everything was going fine but deep down they knew that they were trying to fool themselves into believing something that was not true. Despite telling herself that everything will be okay, Saeed's mother had to take drugs to get a deep and peaceful sleep because she was being tortured psychologically by the current state of the city. This realization was not just for Saeed's mother and Nadia, but for most of the Muslims living in California.

Nadia was sort of a girl who would break all the stereotypes and live her life the way she pleased, she had mixed up with the west to quite an extent and was living her life comfortably. She did what women could not do in the society. She was once riding her bike wearing a black robe when a man greeted her, Nadia decided to ignore. He took that as an insult and "began to swear at her, saying that only a whore could drive a motorcycle" (39). That man might not have used foul language and call her names but he knew that she is a minority, a Muslim woman wearing a black robe, and the authority would not file a complaint against him. She had to face problems due to her stereotype-breaking attitude but she continued with her life the way she wanted to. Then came a time when, "Nadia was coming to acknowledge that this was no longer a city where the risks facing a young woman living independently could be thought of as manageable" (72). Nadia had lived in a non-discriminatory America for a while. She was happy and satisfied but with the emergence of Neo-sincerity in the American society, she had realised that she does not belong here anymore because she was not born an American and she did not feel safe in the foreign land like she once used to. She was previously living in a "Melting Pot" America but now she is living

in a “Salad Bowl” America where she is discriminated on the basis of her religion, colour, race and nationality.

The power structure of the west is strong. If an eastern committed some mistake in a western country, he will be punished brutally, he might even be killed for a trivial matter just because he is not an American-born citizen but an outsider with American nationality. The country to which he belonged will not be able to question the west regarding that matter. An incident in the novel exemplifies this power structure by stating that while driving Saeed’s side mirror scraped a shiny black luxury SUV. “Saeed steeled himself for a shouting, perhaps even a beating but the guard who stepped out of the SUV, assault rifle pointed skyward” (41). The guard could have shot Saeed, since he had a rifle, but he did not because he was summoned back, the gesture is enough to prove the worthlessness of the others in America and send chills through Saeed’s spine. A comparison has been shown between these two vehicles, Saeed is driving a cheap scooter while the native is driving an expensive jeep, this emphasizes the point of economic discrimination proving that the others does not earn as much as the natives and are given poor jobs. The American power structure seems to have belittled Saeed, psychologically, so much that he was ready to accept beatings for a matter that could have been solved by mutual discussion and paying off for the harm being caused.

After the wave of neo-sincerity, Muslims seems to be suffering from valuelessness and doubt the meaning of their existence in the west. The writer explains their despair in the following words, “they talk in low voices, about endless rumours of the doors or about nothings” (77). Talking in a low voice represents their suppression, they could not raise their voices because they were afraid of being heard and they secretly talked about doors, the doors that would lead to another land where

they will find peace. The topic of doors represents their dire need to flee that suppression and talking about nothings represents their state of confusion. The immigrants did not know the reason behind the upheaval and they were unsure about their next step in order to put an end to such an awful life.

Upon moving into Saeed's house, Nadia took the lemon tree along. The lemon tree represents her desire to bring old memories along and it can stand for the nostalgia that she feels when she was forced to move into a house with men; a safer place because she was not safe living alone anymore. This lemon tree stands as a reminder of the old peaceful days as well. The writer says, "Saeed's father saw the lemon tree and smiled for what seemed like the first time in days. Together the three of them placed it on their balcony" (79). The fact that Saeed's father smiled for the first time after his wife's death upon seeing the Lemon Tree makes it even more significant. Saeed's father also seems to be feeling nostalgic since he smiled when he saw the lemon tree and by smiling at the tree he seems to have represented his gaiety for the old peaceful days in America. Since those peaceful days were gone, so the lemon tree did not survive either. The writer says that, "Nadia's lemon tree did not recover, despite repeated watering, and it sat lifeless on their balcony, clung to by a few desiccated leaves" (89). Lemon tree did not come back to its original shape once uprooted; the fate of the lemon tree is quite similar to the fate of Saeed and Nadia in the text of the novel. Lemon tree was once beautifully planted, just like the lives of Saeed and Nadia, both of them were uprooted, tree and the couple, and no matter how hard the couple tried to survive, they still had to settle down in an Island where they were marginalised and were robbed off the basic necessities of life; thus living a life just for the sake of being alive. Their lives were nothing but a few "desiccated leaves"

(89) waiting to be shed. The nostalgic feelings that the three of them had attached to the Lemon tree were gone and dead, like their future.

The agony that immigrants feel during the course of the war has been explained by the writer when he says, “when we migrate, we murder from our lives those we leave behind” (94). The non-Americans first migrated to America, leaving behind their own homeland thus murdering their society, relatives and friends. After that, they migrated from America, once again leaving behind their relatives and friends. When fleeing America, Saeed had to leave behind his father, Saeed had not smiled of laughed for so many days and Nadia had to see a bitter side of Saeed that she had never seen before. Bitter feelings were aroused in a man who always stood positive, through migration because in a way he had killed his father. Though he and his father promised to be in contact and Saeed promised to come back once everything has settled down but deep down both of them knew that it is not going to happen. Migration kills part of a human being just like it killed a part of Saeed where he lost his father and a part of Nadia, where she started feeling distant from Saeed and a part of their relationship where they broke up eventually.

When the “nativist mob” (131) attacked the house where Saeed and Nadia were staying to “Reclaim Britain for Britain” (132), they were stuck between whether to leave the city or not. Saeed and Nadia also heard that “nativist extremists were forming their own legions, with a wink and a nod from the authorities, and the social media chatter was of a coming night of the shattered glass” (132). According to Saeed and Nadia the nativist mob was supported by the government diplomatically. Apparently, it was not the officials who wanted to get rid of the immigrants but the officials supported and aggravated the natives so that they will go to extreme in ejecting the immigrants. By using the words “night of a shattered glass” (132), a

reference is being made to *Kristallnacht* "Night of a broken glass" (Ansel). It is basically taken from World War II. The Jewish community living in Munich were brutally murdered, their shops were looted and their houses were burned down by the natives on 9th November, 1938. This reference was given in order to inform the immigrants about their utter destiny if they do not leave the city in time, it aroused fear into the Muslims greatly.

Nadia and Saeed wanted to leave but they did not know where to go. When they thought about running back to the countries they were born in, "scenes of native backlash" (134) unfolded. They remembered the way they were expelled forcefully from California so they could not consider going back and had nowhere else to go so they stayed in London. Their every move in the house was being observed by the officials through drones and helicopters. The writer narrates, "Above it were drones and helicopters, and inside it were Nadia and Saeed, who had run from war already, and did not know where next to run, and so were waiting, waiting, like so many others" (135). Their every move was being watched by the government and they could not do anything about it, they were waiting helplessly along with so many others for some miracle to happen. They could not go back to where they came from and they were not sure what dangers were being held for them if they flee London; could not revive past, feared the future. Every other day people would hear a flight of the fighter plane in the sky which was basically a reminder "to the people of dark London of the technological superiority of their opponents, of the government and nativist forces" (150) . The immigrants were in a state of confusion where they could not repeat their past and was fearing future so they preferred staying in the present. Fighter planes were hovering over their heads as if they have tons of warfare hidden in their rooms that can be used to fight the militants. The inhuman power that the

Britain exhibited through their technology was overwhelming for the immigrants. The writer explains this confusion and fear in the following way, “an inhuman power, and evoked the kind of dread that a small mammal feels before a predator of an altogether different order, like a rodent before a snake” (151) .The author has called the immigrant a small mammal and the British Government a predator, he is trying to explain the fear being stimulated into the immigrants by describing the scene of a terrified alive rodent thrown right in front of a powerful snake who would gulp the rodent up in a split second. According to the writer Saeed and Nadia faced this problem “not with bravery, and not with panic either, but instead with a resignation shot through the moments of tension, and when the tension receded there was calm, the calm that is called the calm before the storm” (136). Saeed and Nadia remained calm and when the tension was drawn back, the serenity is actually foreshadowing a disaster. So, according to the writer of the novel Saeed and Nadia might expect something disastrous after this calm.

Saeed was not comfortable in the house where he was living temporarily in London, mostly because there was a majority of Nigerians. The writer explains his anguish in the following words, “There were far more of them, and he was alone. This touched upon something basic, something tribal, and evoked tension and a sort of supressed fear” (146). Saeed has started getting neo-sincerity vibes as well. He feels overpowered by the number of Nigerians that surrounded him, he feels alone and tense because he does not have anyone to stand with him in case of emergency. This is the reason that he found himself going to a house in the neighbourhood where he found people coming from his own country and where he could speak his own language. He wanted to move into the house but Nadia refused to leave the house and made Saeed understand her point. Saeed’s neo-sincerity is explained in the book as “it

made him feel part of something, not just something spiritual, but something human, part of this group" (148). Saeed has started feeling comfortable with people of his own country and felt a belonging to people coming from his background; a feeling that he had never had before. A conversation that took place between Saeed and Nadia is perfect example of how Saeed has been hit by western neo-sincerity ideals because of the way he was being treated in the hands of the natives. Nadia, on the other hand does not feel that sort of connection. The conversation states, "Why would we want to move? She said. 'To be among our own kind', Saeed answered. 'What makes them our kind'? 'They are from our country'. 'We've left that place'" (149).

This conversation exhibits the psychological effects on Saeed. He wants to go back to his native country, back to his native people because he feels a certain type of acceptance with them and he lacks that type of acceptance among foreigners. Nadia, on the other hand has not been effected by moving out of California to this extent. Writer has explained the element of neo-sincerity in the following words, "And they had understood that the denial of coexistence would have required one party to cease to exist" (164). That denial of existence of the two parties as a whole has been emphasized by the writer in the novel again and again. The writer says, "Saeed also had the advantage of being among those workers who spoke English so occupied a status in between the foreman and the others of the team" (177). The foreman is basically a native who owns the worker camp where Saeed and Nadia lives, he makes them labour and in return he will reward them with a forty meters of land so that they can built a house on it and live there peacefully for the rest of their lives. A partition can be clearly seen in the text. Foreman stands on one side while "others of the team" stands on the other side. Foreman is a westerner, powerful, owner and making the

“others” work for him. We can clearly feel the distinction between natives and the others.

The displacement has effected Saeed and Nadia differently. Saeed “was drawn to people from their country, the further they moved from the city, the more he sought to strengthen his connection to it” (187). Nadia on the other hand “avoided speaking their language, and she avoided their people……an era that was unambiguously gone for her” (187). Saeed felt a strong sense of longing for his native land, he wanted to strengthen his connection with his homeland because he suffered so much in the native’s land and he knew that he does not have a future here in London, rather he should reunite with his own people. Writer has explained Saeed’s transformation in the following words, “the possible death of his ideal self” (188). The ideal that Saeed had made was dying, he had come out of that aura and stepped into a new one which made him realise that he had been living a lie his entire life. Nadia, on the other hand, was drawn away from her people by avoiding speaking her native language and socialising with her own people. These were the psychological effects that Saeed and Nadia had because of the displacement.

4.1.3: Hamid’s Intrusive Voice:

The author apparently seems to be simply narrating a Muslim couple’s love story and their hardships but on a deeper level, he is trying to explain what Muslims go through when they live on the western land in this contemporary era. The author seems to be hinting that the Muslims are being unjustly treated throughout the novel and apart from the Muslim discriminatory issue, he has also highlighted American Islamophobia in the text of the novel.

In the very first sentence of the book we are given a foreground of the entire situation. Hamid mentions an unnamed city saying that it's mostly at peace, "or at least not yet openly at war" (1). This phase gives us an idea that a secret war is going on that will break out openly soon. The author is referring to the American Neo-sincerity that will hit the others hard in face, so it is the main reason behind that war that is yet to be fought later in the novel. This phrase in the beginning of the novel indicates a disastrous change that is going to occur in that city and the fact that the city is mostly at peace right now is the "salad bowl" (Whytias) concept.

This concept is further explained through the dressing of the citizens. While talking about the way those people dresses, Hamid says "they did it within certain bounds of course, so these choices meant something" (1). Everyone dresses according to their limitations, we are told that everyone had limitations according to their religions or cultures and their dressing represented their tribe. Since people coming from different backgrounds were living peacefully previously so it can be an indication towards the concept of the "Salad bowl" (Whytias) that is yet to be destroyed by the neo-sincerity. This line can also indicate the essentialism already present, since it mentions that everyone has their own outfit according to their limits, this type of individualism represents the literary theory of post-postmodernism. This shift is very much evident in the lines where Hamid says, "our eternally impending ending end does not put a stop to our transient beginnings and middles…." (2). Mohsin Hamid foregrounds the idea of exiting west. By using the phrase "eternally impending ending" (2), he means to say that the Muslims will have an eternal end in America. According to the author, our beginnings and middles were situated on a short span of time which suggests that our happy days in America were very short.

The Muslims will have to leave west forever and this is going to happen soon and it might stay like that for a longer period of time.

While talking about the economy of the city, Mohsin Hamid says, “The economy was sluggish from mounting unrest” (4). The writer does not mention any sort of unrest clearly in the city so it can be a reference to the presence of immigrants ,mentioned earlier in the book, in that city which has caused unrest since they do not belong there. Mohsin Hamid writes in the same paragraph “clients seem to cut outdoor advertising” (4), it is another reference to the unwelcoming attitude of the west towards the east. The word “outdoor” may refer to the immigrants and taking down outdoor advertisement means that outsiders (people belonging to other states) are not welcomed to deal with the insiders and it also refers to the idea that Americans do not want to deal with the outsiders even if it comes to running a business, they want to push the others to peripherals completely.

Saeed, the protagonist of the story, works at an advertising agency and is given a task to advertise a soap effectively. The writer says, “Only a smattering of the images he selected had anything to do with the soap” (5). This statement is not a satire on Saeed’s work but it actually represents our lost identities by making an analogy, the identities that are yet to be regained through neo-sincerity. Writer is trying to say that whatever influences we have taken from the west, they have nothing to do with our actual beings, those influences does not affect our truth in any way. We know our truth and American realises it too. On another occasion Saeed took some drugged mushrooms that was supposed to make him feel different but it did not work. The writer says that, “soon he had concluded that by some quirk of biology or psychology, he was simply resistant to whatever that mushroom was supposed to do” (43). This mushroom, here, stands for the western influence, it did not affect Saeed’s core like it

should have had because Saeed was biologically and psychologically resistant to the influences that were attacking him from every angle unlike Nadia who was quite Americanised.

Mohsin Hamid talks about the loneliness that the post-modernist had to suffer since they broke the bonds with their past and did not exactly know where they stand in the post-postmodernist era. The post-modernist human felt lost and alone. The author describes the situation of a post-modernist human in the following words, “the woman who slept, slept alone. He who stood above her, stood alone. He was aware that alone a person is almost nothing” (8). This loneliness caused by modernism called for a shift, bringing in post-postmodernism. Post postmodernism gets rid of this type of loneliness by uniting people into a single unit but this unity has not proved to be positive since it gave birth to neo-sincerity and made lives harder for Muslims.

Mohsin Hamid is of the view that we have taken too many influences from the west in order to settle down with them but that did not help, we are still outsiders for them and while attempting to persuade Americans to take us in, we have lost our own culture. He writes, “The small flat was once in a handsome building with an ornate through now crumbling façade” (9). The beautiful building represents the eastern culture that was once blooming but in order to fit in, Muslims adopted the American culture and discarded their own traditions. That beautiful building turned into a wreck just like the eastern culture and this decay is quite evident in the lines where Hamid says, “….many of those that had been there before were there no longer” (11). Our values, traditions, sense of individuality and identity is being challenged by the author in these lines and he is trying hard to remind us of our own core. On one hand, the writer is focussing on the ideals of neo-sincerity of the west that is uniting the entire western world against the eastern world and on the other hand, he is trying to unite

easterners as well so that we can fight off the western injustice with the full force of unity and integrity.

Neo-sincerity is once again foregrounded in the lines where the writer says, “Light from other centuries, only now reaching” (14). This light is a metaphor for the ideals of neo-sincerity that is going to be invoked by the westerners which would result in an agitation of the Muslim’s oppression in the west. This light can also refer to the neo-sincerity of the eastern that the author is trying to invoke, furthermore, it can also refer to Saeed’s self-realization or his essentialist stance of neo-sincerity in the text of the novel. At the end of the novel, Saeed is attracted towards people of his own faith, language and country which proves that he has realized what he is and he prefers to be among his people because he knows that he would not get social acceptance anywhere else.

We are often told in the novel that Nadia is doodling on the margins of the page. This idea refers to the fact that Muslims have to keep a low profile. If one writes clearly in the middle of the page, it means that he is confident enough to put his thoughts into words fearlessly but if one doodles on the margins, since doodling does not mean anything, it indicates the worthlessness of one’s presence. We were also given a scenario when Saeed and Nadia were walking on the sidewalk instead of walking on the road with other people and the reason that they prefer to stay on the margin refers to their marginalization that is being faced by the characters of the novel while living in the western world. They cannot afford to step in the middle of the road because they do not want to highlight their presence and they do not want to be seen or noticed by anyone, which makes both of them a double minority (outsiders as well as Muslims).

Mohsin Hamid talks about the second date of Nadia and Saeed while describing the Chinese restaurant in the following words, “it was lit by what looked like candle filled lanterns, but were in fact, illuminated by flame shaped, electronically flickering bulbs” (20). On the surface level he has talked about lamps that looks like they have a flickering candle in them while being lit by a bulb. However, on a deeper level he is referring to the America’s international discourse where they claim to welcome everyone into their country and to give them equal rights. Just like the lanterns, American discourse is a hoax too. On the same event when they ordered food, though it was Chinese, they did not feel comfortable with using chopsticks. They used fork instead because they were used to it and the fact that both of them were not being able to use chopsticks refers to the cultural differences that we have with the west. Though they ate at a Chinese restaurant but they did not eat it the way Chinese does. Similarly, they did live in west but they did not feel comfortable with the western norms, so they followed their own culture to some extent which distinguished them from the Americans. The author says that, “they spoke quietly, cautious not to attract the attention of nearby dinner” (22). They are trying to hide in the dark instead of coming out in the limelight in order to avoid being noticed because if they do, they might have to face problems. According to the author, this is the way Muslims usually live in America; marginalized, quiet and ducked into a dark alley.

While talking about the Filipinos’ agony in a foreign land, the writer has actually talked about the problems that are being faced by Muslims in the west since Filipinos are considered others too. The writer says, “Not the first time this week that he had seen a group of Filipinos who seemed oddly clueless in his bit of town” (28), the author is indirectly making us realise our own state of being in a foreign land

through this excerpt from the book. He seems to be hinting that since the Muslims are not in their own town, so they are oddly clueless about their present as well as the future.

Mohsin Hamid has mentioned a battle going on between the government and military. When stating the struggles that the Muslim couple had to face, he is actually uncovering the Muslim's struggle in the west. Elements of Neo-sincerity are very much evident in the lines where the writer says, "and the battles that now commenced and raged without meaningful interruption were far more ferocious and less unequal, than what had come before" (65). The battle that Mohsin Hamid has mentioned is actually the battle of neo-sincerity. Previously the west did consider the presence of easterners in their land, but after the birth of western neo-sincerest ideals, they had completely turned their backs to the east and the battle is not between government and military but between the east and west where west stands powerful and east stands succumbed.

Writer talks about the ravaged state of the city while saying, "…patched of government land and military land. The frayed seams between the patches were the most deadly spaces and to be avoided at all costs" (66). These frayed patches were actually the Muslims residing in California. Americans could either take refuge with the government or with the military but the Muslims had nowhere to go because they were not the citizens and did not belong to America in any way despite living for generations in America. Muslims were killed and their properties were destroyed because they belonged to the tribe that resided on those frayed patches. Nadia's house also happened to be situated on the frayed patches and was completely demolished by the Americans.

The writer has used doors and windows as a symbol to demonstrate the stance of neo-sincerity of the Americans. Typically we use windows to look out of a room, we perceive the everyday life situation through the windows, While looking out of a window, we would know the time, weather, can see the sky etc. It is almost like the windows are giving us a view of the world outside. On the other hand, we use to doors to either enter or exit that outside world depending on our needs at that moment. We are often told in the text of the novel that the widows shattered because of the bombing, Nadia had to tape up the window so cold cannot get in and Saeed had to cover his shattered window by lining up his bed vertically with the wall. One can sense that everyone is trying to block the outside world which is effecting their inside world unpleasantly, this notions tends to highlight the consequences of American's neo-sincerity quite clearly. Muslims did not have to cover up their windows previously, instead they used to sit on their balconies and enjoy the view but that is not the case now. Americans have been invoked by neo-sincerity and the ongoing battle in the city is actually the ongoing battle of neo-sincerity. Nadia and Saeed were told that there is a door that could take them away from the agony into a peaceful land. The writer says, "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 is the trick" (85). The doors did exist everywhere but no one knew where they led to and entering them was as risky as staying back in America. In other words the writer means that there is a door that would take away the agony of Muslims who are being mistreated by the west on the basis of their nationality, but the problem with that door is that one had to find it and if he enters the wrong door, he will have to pay for it with his life. Muslims will be effected by western neo-sincerity whether they like it or not. He writes in the book, "such dreams

were the dreams of fools" (70). He clearly says that if we think we would not be effected and will find a way out, we will be just fooling ourselves.

The writer has narrated a story of an old man who had once served in navy and is now trying to talk to an officer who is old enough to be his grandson. That officer is being rude to him and would not satisfyingly answer his queries. The officer reminded him of "when he was their age, had their strength and their suppleness of movement" (47). The pre post-postmodernist era was like that old man, the equality and rights that the Muslims were preserved in the west once but it no longer prevails like the authority and health of the old man. All the positivity that west once had for the outsiders is decaying like the old man. Era of Neo-sincerity came into being and it would not consider the presence of outsiders in their homeland a pleasant affair just like the young officer who was being rude to the old man and wanted the old man to stop pestering him. The young officer scolded the old man which reminded the old man of his father. Writer says, "In some ways, the officer did look like his father" (47). The relationship of a father and a son refers to the power structure of the world. In this narration, America is the father because a father has the authority to boss around his son, while east is the son, because it is weak enough to be bossed around.

The writer has reinforced the idea of neo-sincerity every now and then through his characters. He says about Saeed's father, "his notion of helping the youth and the country through teaching and research is merely an expression of vanity, and the far more decent path would have been to pursue wealth at all costs" (49). The writer is trying to say that it would have been better if he were sincere with himself instead of being sincere with the American education system and if the father had saved up some money for himself, it would have helped him out in the future. His teachings and research will be of no use when he is in trouble.

The author has mocked America for her barbarity regarding the other sect. he says, “Broken by activities of drones and aircraft that bombed from the heavens” (81). By using the words heaven, the writer has implied the idea that American’s render themselves as a God and their homeland is a heaven. Next to them and their land, nothing matters; no human, no sect, no rules, nothing and they can do whatever they feel like because they have a certain godly power over rest of the world.

The drastic effects of neo-sincerity on the American nation was realised worldwide. The writer says, “short-waved radios claimed that even the most reputable international broadcasters has acknowledged the doors existed, and indeed were being discussed by world leaders as a major global crisis” (83). The migration of the non-Americans from America is seen as a major global crisis but no one can do anything to help except for making doors that people can use to exit west.

Nadia and Saeed were inhabited in an immigrant camp that mostly has non-Americans because they were different shades of brown instead of white. The writer describes their presence as, “many colours and hues but mostly falling within the band of brown that ranged from dark chocolate to milky tea” (100). This proves that Americans had expelled the Easterners from their territory since Americans, themselves, are always white.

Nadia and Saeed fled to London from the island of Mykonos and stayed in a house along with other immigrants which was well furnished and had all the basic necessities of life. Upon using plush towel, Nadia “felt like a princess using them or at least like the daughter of a dictator who was willing to kill without mercy in order for his children to pamper themselves with cotton as such” (121). The author is indirectly trying to say that west is the dictator that has killed many easterners mercilessly

because they saw the outsiders as a threat to their prosperity and by killing, looting and wiping out the easterners from their lands, west thinks, will bring prosperity and gaiety to the natives of the land.

The immigrants had their own social standing, they were not allowed to mingle with the natives and west somehow managed to group all the outsiders one way or another. This idea of labelling west as one group and east another is evident in the lines where the author says, “here they were penned in together, and being penned in made them a grouping, a group” (124). All the immigrants were penned in the house in London by the western militants. It was like one against another; natives against immigrants, although the immigrants belonged to different countries but they were penned together that made them a group; group of eastern immigrants taking refuge in London.

People who fled California to save their lives landed in London to be mistreated too but on a lower level. According to the author, the immigrants had set up a number of tents in Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. The writer explains their presence in London as “Westminster and Hammersmith legal residents were in minority, and natives-born ones vanishingly few, with local newspapers referring to the area as worst of the black holes in the fabric of the nations” (126). The immigrants were the black holes that had made the fabric of nation ugly and these black holes on a fabric are usually stitched back to regain the solidarity of the fabric but it still leave marks; thus implying the idea of neo-sincerity. Immigrants seems to be called black holes in the text because according to the author they are making the entire nation look ugly and might be forced to flee from London as well and the fact that they had muddied in fabric of nation will always linger around and be like a bad taste in mouth that stays long after eating something bitter.

London was not welcoming the immigrants either. After staying in London for a while, Saeed and Nadia had to face yet another unrest that had caused half of the immigrants exit the house as well. They were attacked by a "nativist mob to reclaim Britain for Britain" (131-132). The natives took form of a mob and attacked the immigrants and had planned a wipe out mission for the entire Britain, starting from London. They want Britain for British people only because natives belonged there, immigrants did not. We can sense the new-sincerest element that has hit British people hard and is the reason that Britain is disallowing the immigrants to take refuge in their land.

A major scientific model was created in 18th century that had divided people on the basis on their skin tone. According to the model Americans were red, Europeans were white and rest of the world was in the shades of yellow, brown and black thus known as dark skinned (Boeree 1). Mohsin Hamid has referred to this model while mentioning a Cheery tree that has just blossomed with white flowers and looked almost like white cotton from the field. The cotton that was "waiting to be picked, waiting for labour, for the efforts of dark bodies from the villages" (136). The colour white of the tree refers to Europe and the tree refers to Europeans countries and the presence of the dark bodies, who clearly are not Americans or Europeans, refers to the immigrants. Writer says that the white cheery tree now looks dark because of the dark children playing on its boughs which means that immigrants have polluted Europe by their presence. The writer further says, "Just then, the children, who were thrilled in nature, playing imaginary games, lost in the clouds of white, and as bloodshed loomed they made of these trees that were perhaps not intended to be climbed the stuff of a thousand fantasies" (137). Writer is trying to say that the dark children who were happy to be playing on the boughs of the trees, upon seeing

bloodshed, realized that these trees should not have been played upon because they were a hoax. The feeling of an easterner regarding life in America is almost the same to the situation presented in these lines. Foxes are known for their capability of dealing with difficult situations, ingenuity and adaptability. Writer has used the word fox for the immigrants, he says in the book, “Such a noble animal, noble though it was fond of rummaging in rubbish bins” (139). The fox who is of high calibre is now poking around rubbish bins, the author is trying to say that the eastern who were once living a life nobility and prosperity are now living a life of a beggar looking for food in trash bins. Saeed and Nadia often looked for that fox at night and they were relieved when they saw it “for it meant the fox had not disappeared and had not been killed and had not found another part of the town to make home” (139). By looking at the Fox, Saeed and Nadia were actually looking at their fellow immigrants and when they saw the fox, they were relieved because their fellow immigrants, whom they saw as a fox, were safe. They had not been killed, disappeared or found home somewhere else.

The author has called the areas of London where the immigrants were residing as “Dark London” (142) because electricity had gone out from the areas where the immigrants resided while rest of the city was lit. The writer has made a distinction between the “Dark London” and the bright London with an example of an ocean. The writer says, “But in London, there were parts glowing up in the dark, and in contrast the city’s dark swatches seemed darker, the way that blackness in the oceans suggest not less light form above but a sudden drop-off in the depths below” (142). London was not welcoming the immigrants either, as a result Saeed and Nadia were forced to leave London as well.

Writer has explained neo-sincerity in the following way, “Without borders nations appeared to be becoming somewhat illusionary, and people were questioning what role they had to play” (155). According to Mohsin Hamid borders are very important for a nation to know who they are and how they differentiate themselves from others.

The author has explained the feelings of refugees in the following words, “they were ashamed, for the displaced, was a common feeling and that there was no particular shame in being ashamed” (184). Saeed received a family on the worker camp in London who were ashamed of their current situation. Author, however, believes that being ashamed is a very common feeling that the displaced people suffer from because people once living with dignity are now being forced to camp in a foreign land and labour for food and shelter.

Saeed and Nadia could not settle down in London so they decided to flee. They ended up in Marin which is a small county in Northern California across San Francisco. Refugees were given a specific region where they could live, that region was the poorest and did not have a proper approach to the basic necessities of life. The writer explains this poverty and low level of living standard in comparison to San Francisco as, “Marin was overwhelmingly poor, all the more so in comparison to the sparkling affluence of San Francisco” (192). Author has made a comparison between these two places; Marin and San Francisco. By comparing these two places, he is actually presenting us with a picture of the type of lifestyles these two communities have. Marin in comparison to San Francisco is not just poor but overwhelmingly poor. Since, the refugees or the ‘others’ were residing in Marin, so providing Marin with basic necessities of life was not considered important by the government. Marin was treated like a waste land that was full of trash.

The writer strictly believes that you cannot be a native unless you are born in that country. He has mentioned three types of people who call themselves natives but are still residing with the refugees in Marin, though they might consider themselves natives of the land but they are actually falling into the category of the 'others'. The writer says "and many others consider themselves native to the country, by which they meant that they or their grandparents or the grandparents of their grandparents had been born on the strip of land that stretched from mid-northern Pacific to mid-northern Atlantic" (196). This is the first type who consider themselves the natives because their ancestors were born in West. Writer explains the second type in the following words, "people who advocated this position more strongly, tended to be drawn from the ranks of those with light skin who looked most like the natives of Britain" (196). The second type of people are the ones who have the same physical features as the natives of Britain. They forcefully claim themselves natives because they look like British people but in reality, they are the others who luckily happen to look like the natives. The third type is explain in the following words, "A third layer of nativeness was composed of those who other thought directly descended from the human beings who had been brought from Africa to this continent centuries ago as slaves" (197). The third layer was the kinship of slaves that were brought from Africa centuries ago. Though it happened centuries ago and black racism had been eradicated to some extent, even then these people were labelled as the others. The people whose generation after generation had lived in America were still not Americans. Writer has made it clear that Americans will not accept anyone as an American unless he is an American by blood, there is no other way. Only God can make you an American, you yourself cannot, no matter what you do.

Saeed's parents were very worried about Saeed when he was growing up. In the west, commonly teenagers move out of their parents' homes in order to earn money and stand on their own. Saeed's parents' thought that Saeed will also move out once he has grown up and leave them since this was the tradition in West. The writer says, "Or may be because they worried for their son in a country that seemed to worship money above all". (201). Writer has mocked the familial system of the west by stating that their kids are more attracted to money and once they have grown up and are old enough to financially support themselves, they do not care for their old parents anymore. They treat old parents as a burden and this is the main reason that there are a large number of old homes found in the western world. East, on the other hand, takes good care of their elders out of love and moral obligation. Saeed's parents' feared that someday they will have to suffer because of the circumstances in which Saeed is being brought up.

Writer seems to have found a positive aspect of the neo-sincerity of the west. He seems to believe that even if the west has marginalised the east, there is still hope. He says in the book, "The apocalypse appeared to have arrived yet it was not apocalyptic, which is to say while the changes were jarring they were not the end and life went on" (215). Author calls the western neo-sincerity an apocalypse which is not at all apocalyptic and he believes that this apocalypse still has a silver lining. The life on Marin was hard because of lack of food, shelter, health care etc but even then that life was not utterly unpleasant. People were coming from different regions, they had their own languages, cultures, cuisines, music etc. yet they lived on Marin in a single community. They all were the marginalised others who had found peace among themselves and the refugees did not interact much with the people of San Francisco or California because they had found a land where they could live peacefully without

being targeted as the outsider. All the non-Americans on American land were living on an enclosed region and this small piece of land was their heaven. The fact that they could not live side by side or mingled into the American society proves the neo-sincerity that has not only emerged in the American nation but is being fully functional without any fear.

4.2: OTHER POST-POSTMODERNIST DIMENSIONS:

This research mainly revolves around neo-sincerity but a few other aspects of post-postmodernism has also been explored and explained. The post-postmodernist tenet of digitalization is very much evident in the book. The use of mobile phone and internet seem to be a recurrent theme in the text of *Exit West*. In the beginning of the third chapter we are told that Nadia and Saeed were "always in possession of their phones" (35). Saeed felt overpowered by all the applications he had in his phone that's why he had limited it to some extent, all the mobile phone applications were "a banquet of limitless food, stuffing himself, until he felt dazed and sick" (36) to him. Saeed seems to have realised the effects of mobile phone and downloadable mobile applications and the author says that Saeed thinks of those endless mobile phone applications as a buffet dinner/lunch where one stuffs himself with so much food that he ends up being sick because of overeating. Saeed compares the feeling that one gets after eating too much and not being able to digest it to having too many applications downloaded in his cell phone. Saeed feels the same type of mental and physical agony when he sees a sea of mobile applications just one click away that's why he tries to stay away from downloading too many applications and stick strictly to only what he needs. The character of the novel has clearly realised the drastic effects that digitalization has on his life that's why he desperately tries to stay away from it, for as much as possible.

When the government put a ban on mobile signals and internet, people were baffled. The writer explains their situation in the following words, “it was as if they were bats and had lost the use of their ears” (57). A bat uses echo to find his location or it can be said that a bat is simply not functional without its hearing sense at night. The author has compared the people deprives of mobile signals to bats whose hearing sense has been taken away from them. The author says in the book that the people were just running here and there, they were moving around in a confused state like the bats in the dark who had lost their hearing sense and this comparison is made in order to represent a clear picture of the dependency of the post-postmodernist human being on the gadgets. The author further says in the text of the novel that “Phones themselves have the innate power of distancing one from one’s physical surroundings” (185). Writer has emphasized the effect of cell phones on our daily lives and made us realize that we may connect with each other on mobile phone but we are distanced from our physical surroundings. The time and thoughts that we should be putting into our surroundings are being put into the screen of our mobile phone that has caused an aura of loneliness in our generation.

Writer has talked against the use of television in the following words, “Children who went to sleep unfed but could see on some small screen people in foreign lands preparing and consuming or even conducting food fights that the very fact of their existence boggled the mind” (39). The author is clearly stating that social media has drawn a clear line between the rich and the poor. The poor can watch the rich having a luxurious life and it erupts a sense of jealousy and those poor people constantly compare themselves with the people they see on television. They usually believe in everything they are shown on TV, that’s why it effects them psychologically. People seek knowledge through media without knowing that Media

can be biased, it can help creating a discourse that causes harm to a certain community or a group of people. Islamophobia is being spread by media in a sense that the whole world is shown the darker side of the Muslims that's why the west doubts the action of every Muslim. The idea that every Muslim will cause harm to the western society is being imbedded into the minds of the Americans and British with the help of Social, print and electronic media.

This chapter discusses the way Muslims are being treated in the west. A clear distinction has been made between the natives and the 'others'. This distinction is found in the text of the novel *Exit West* every now and then. Apart from the Muslim's plight in the west, the effects of media on the contemporary human being has also been highlighted. The propagation of Islamophobia through media links these two sections of the analysis. So, the analysis is being carried out by applying the two tenets, Neo-sincerity and Digitalisation, of literary theory of Post-postmodernism on the text of the novel *Exit West* which has highlighted the plight of Muslims around the world and drastic effect of mobile phone usage.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of this dissertation has enabled me to resolve the research questions set forth while initiating the study. The first questions deals with a political shift that can be sensed in the world politics and has made the western world anti-Muslim. This western anti-Muslim approach marks the basics of the text of the novel written by a Muslim writer named Mohsin Hamid. Mohsin Hamid wrote this piece of literature just in time of a political upheaval. This novel clearly evinces his disappointment into the western state of mind. He has written such a powerful narrative to make Muslims realise the western power structure as well as the naivety of those who still think that living in America or Britain makes them the citizens of these countries.

The concept of *us* and *them* is being reinforced in the text of the novel through recurrent events. The writer has clearly stated that the west had strictly following their family trees and the concept of British-Muslims and American-Muslims is being negated. Muslims living in west are leading a life full of physical, emotional and psychological labour and that labour of the Muslims in western countries is being explained through the characters of the novel named as Saeed and Nadia. Saeed and Nadia are Muslims and the ill-treatment that they receive throughout the text of the novel is based on their religion. At the very beginning, their families are being killed and they are forced to leave the city. They go from one country to another, from one town to another and from one community to another in order to find peace. Throughout the text of the novel, refugee crisis can be clearly sensed as Saeed and Nadia are constantly seeking refuge but they fail to settle down in a place where they will be given food, shelter, health care and other necessities of life. Wherever they plan to settle down, they are again forced to flee the area and they

finally had to settle down in a town that had no link with the natives because it was just a poor neighbourhood where the refugees resided without having any social terms with the Natives. This again brings us to the concept of us and the others. Here, natives are the 'Us' category who actually belongs to the land and the refugees, Saeed and Nadia, belongs to the 'others' category. The others are kept in poor circumstances, totally sidelined by the 'us'. On the other hand, the 'us' category enjoys everything that the world has to offer. The Muslims who had lived their entire lives in the west, who were born here, who had never been to their actual homelands have to suffer because they are labelled as the other. Through the character of Saeed and Nadia, Muslims are being told that they will be 'others' for the west and the western societies will always be apathetic towards the Muslim society although Muslims have always lived with them side by side for many years. There was a time when America used to call itself a 'salad bowl' and a 'melting pot' because the America nation comprised of multiple other nations. There was a time when the Muslims were welcomed and were given equal treatment as the non-Muslims but things changed in the 2000s, the days when Muslims could roam around freely while keeping their heads high were gone forever. Now, they have to keep a low profile in order to survive in an anti-Muslim society like America and Britain. No one takes the services being provided by the Muslims in building the American culture into account. Their hard work did not pay off and it will never pay off because they do not belong to the western family trees. The text of the novel reinforces the idea of us and others quite often and makes us realise our own worth as a Muslim nation and the bitter attitude of the west towards us.

The second research question targets the western Islamophobia. Muslim are being targeted by the media directly and indirectly for causing terrorism and other

such problems around the world. The narrative that propagates Islamophobia is being propelled by powerful western countries like Great Britain and America. The western Islamophobia narrative is responsible for the plight of Muslims in America and Britain. This grand narrative is spreading hatred in the west towards the Muslims of the world and the religion of Islam is constantly being aligned with terrorism through media. Without knowing the actual cause of terrorism or the actual religion of terrorists, west is propagating the idea that every Muslim is prone to terrorism one way or another and this is the reason that west has trust issues and Muslims are kept under a twenty-four hour surveillance. This type of surveillance effects the Muslim society emotionally, they have a feeling of being watched and they cannot roam around freely and go about their business as the once used to. They are under the constant doubtful eye of the west and their every move is being noticed and analysed. This type of strict surveillance has caused multiple psychological problems in the Muslims like not being able to concentrate on the given task, feeling worthlessness, feeling guilty for no reason etc. Saeed and Nadia are being seen to be the prey of the constant American surveillance. The natives are not being watched because according to the west, natives can never cause unrest in their country and it's the Muslim communities that are responsible for terrorist attacks throughout the world. This type of reputation-damaging narrative is very much prevalent in the text of the novel *Exit West.*

Media is also responsible for the propagation of Islamophobia around the world, mostly through electronic media. The 21st century human is addicted to media and they accept whatever they are shown on their mobile phones or televisions without investigating whether the news is genuine or not. These days, people are dependent on their phones to such an extent that they feel completely lost if parted

from their cell phones. Extreme attachment with the mobile phones has weakened familial bonds and it is ailing the physical and mental conditions by causing loneliness and despair. Apart from talking about the sufferings of the Muslims living in west, the catastrophic effects of overuse of mobile phones is also being highlighted since both of these factors are interlinked. Human of this era is addicted to media and media is being used by the first world countries to disseminate the grand narrative of Islamophobia, so every person who seeks knowledge through mobile phone or television are made to believe that Muslims are causing unrest worldwide. This issue of digitalisation answers the last research question of this dissertation.

To conclude the entire dissertation, it can be said that this study has helped to bring two important issue of the contemporary era; the discrimination being faced by the Muslims in west due to the western Islamophobia and the addiction of mobile phones that propagates the Islamophobia. These two factors are responsible for the ill-treatment that Muslims face throughout the text of the novel. West has started strictly following the ideals of neo-sincerity and has started sidelining Muslims completely. Western neo-sincerity ideals are causing fanaticism in the American society. Through the text of the novel, we can clearly sense a shift in the western stance by proving that the country that once used to welcome outsiders is now begrudging them. This study has helped to understand the consequences of western neo-sincerity being faced by the Muslims. However, the Muslims are yet to find a solution and implement it in order to split up the discourse that hold Muslims responsible for the terror attacks and other such grave issues emerging throughout the world. In order to restore the peace and honour of the Muslims, things must be brought back to normal. The shift in the western stance must be broken down by proving that terrorism has no religion.

Works Cited

Akker, Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den. "Notes on metamodernism." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Culture* (2010). www.metamodernism.com/2010/10/24/notes-on-metamodernism.

Ansel, Gila. “Kristallnacht.” *The History Place* (2013): p.2. www.jewishagency.org/antisemitism/content/23949.

Apasangi, Nikshep D. *Quora*. 2017. April 2017. www.quora.com/What-is-post-postmodernism.

Archon, Sofo. “The Harmful Effects of Watching Television.” *The Unbounded Spirit* (2018). www.theunboundedspirit.com/the-harmful-effects-of-watching-television.

Arthur, Antony. *The Guardian*. 2015. April 2017.

Authors, Famous. *Famous Authora*. 2015. Internet. April 2017.

—. *Mohsin Hamid*. 2017. April 2017.

Bennet, Arnold. *The old wives' tale*. 1908. www.goodreads.com/book/show/188454.The_Old_Wives_Tale.

Berna, George. “What is postmodernism? What are the Characteristics of Postmodern Literature?” *Literary Articles* (2004). www.literary-articles.com/2013/08/what-is-postmodernism-what-are.html.

Boeree, Dr. C. George. “Race.” *Race* (2007): 7. www.google.com.pk/search?ei=xmcNXOLXBvmO1fAP5_-G4A4&q=race+by+Dr+C+george&oq=race+by+Dr+C+george&gs_l=psy-ab.3..33i21.259497.266044..266252...0.0..0.528.6999.3-12j5j1.....0....1..gws-wiz.....0..0j0i67j0i19j0i22i30i19j0i22i30j0i22i10i30j33i22i29i3>.

Cheah, Pheng. *Spectral nationality*. 2003.

Colton, Aaron. “Donald Trump and the "New Sincerity" Artists Have More in Common Than Either Would Like to Admit.” (2016). www.pastemagazine.com/articles/2016/08/donald-trump-and-the-new-sincerity-artists-have-mo.html.

Coover, Robert. *THE PUBLIC BURNING*. VIKING PRESS, 1977.

Crisco, Katie. “COLUMN: Mohsin Hamid's "Exit West" mirrors theme of lost home.” *COLUMN: Mohsin Hamid's "Exit West" mirrors theme of lost home* (2018).

Eagleton, Terry. *After Theory*. Penguin Books, 2003.

Ellis, Bret Eston. “American Psycho.” (1991).

Epstein, Mikhaial. “The Place of Postmodernism in Postmodernity.” *The Place of Postmodernism in Postmodernity* (1998): p.5. www.focusing.org/apm_papers/epstein.html.

Fitzgerald, Johnathan. “Sincerity, Not Irony, Is Our Age's Ethos.” *Sincerity, Not Irony, Is Our Age's Ethos* (2012): p.4. www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2012/11/sincerity-not-irony-is-our-ages-ethos/265466.

Gravemaker, Roos. “I FEEL THEREFORE I AM: WES ANDERSON, DONALD TRUMP, AND NEW SINCERITY.” *Writer's Block* (2017). www.writersblockmagazine.com/2017/01/21/i-feel-therefore-i-am-wes-anderson-donald-trump-and-new-sincerity.

Guardian, The. *The Guardian*. 2014. April 2017.

—. *Exit West*. Riverhead books, 2017.

—. *Exit West*. Riverhead books, 2017.

—. *How to get filthy rich in rising Asia*. 2013. www.goodreads.com/book/show/15815364-how-to-get-filthy-rich-in-rising-asia.

—. *Moth Smoke*. UK: Farrar, 2000.

—. *Moth Smoke*. Picador, 2000. www.goodreads.com/book/show/440777.Moth_Smoke.

—. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Hamish Hamilton, 2007. www.theguardian.com/books/2007/mar/03/featuresreviews.guardianreview20.

Harris, Kelly. *Stanford Univrsity Press*. 2015. April 2017.

Higins, Tucker. "Supreme Court rules that Trump's travel ban is constitutional." *CNBC* (2018). www.cnbc.com/2018/06/26/supreme-court-rules-in-trump-muslim-travel-ban-case.html.

—. *Holy Terror*. Oxford Univeristy Press, 2005.

Huber, Irmtraud. *Literature after Postmodernism*. 2014. www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9781137429902#aboutAuthors>.

Istenes, Brandon. *Quora*. 2013. April 2017.

Jameson, A D. *What we talk about when we talk about the New Sincerity, part 2*. 2012. April 2017. www.htmlgiant.com/haut-or-not/what-we-talk-about-when-we-talk-about-the-new-sincerity-part-2.

Jamesons, A D. "What we talk about when we talk about the New Sincerity." *What we talk about when we talk about the New Sincerity* (2012).

www.htmlgiant.com/haut-or-not/what-we-talk-about-when-we-talk-about-the-new-sincerity-part-2.

Jardan, Rodolfo. “Plato's Allegary of the cave- metaxy.” *Buscando a las Musas Perdidas* (2017). www.perdidasmusas.blogspot.com/2017/08/platos-allegory-of-cave-metaxy.html?view=flipcard>.

Kelly, Adam. “David Foster Wallace and the New Sincerity in American Fiction.” *David Foster Wallace and the New Sincerity in American Fiction* (2010).

Khan, SA. “Representational Politics And National Ideological Discourse: A Discursive Analysis Of The British, American, And Indian Fictional Narratives Of The Wars Of Independence.” (2018).

Kim, Erin. “The Negative Effects of Digital Technology.” *Bobcat Times* (2017). www.asglnews.org/1381/opinion/perspectives/the-negative-effects-of-digital-technology/>.

King, Stephen. “Quotes.” *Quotes* (2005).

Kirby, Alan. *The Death of postmodernism and beyond*. 2012. April 2017. www.philosophynow.org/issues/58/The_Death_of_Postmodernism_And_Beyond>.

—. *The Death of Postmodernism And Beyond*. 2015. April 2017.

Kuiper, Kethine. “Modernism.” *Modernism* (2016): p.4. www.charlottemuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Modernist-Literature.pdf.

Laughland, Oliver. “Muslim Americans on Trump's travel ban: 'We live as second-class citizens'.” *The Guardian* (2018). www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jun/26/muslim-americans-trump-travel-ban.

Lorcher, Trent. *Modernism in Literature*. 2015. www.scribd.com/doc/189836124/What-Are-Characteristics-of-Modernist-Literature>.

Main, Zain R. “Willing representatives: Mohsin Hamid and Pakistani literature abroad.” *Herald* (2019).

Maison, Emelda. “Difference Between Modernism and Postmodernism.” *Difference Between Modernism and Postmodernism* (2011): 3. www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/politics/ideology-politics/difference-between-modernism-and-postmodernism.

Malik, Alia. “The FBI’s ‘Vulgar Betrayal’ of Muslim Americans.” *NVR Daily* (2018). www.nybooks.com/daily/2018/04/21/the-fbis-vulgar-betrayal-of-muslim-americans.

Monceaux, Jonathan. “The Anti-Modern and Modern Values of the 1920s.” (2003): 5. www.angelfire.com/film/sunrise/amvsm.html.

Nealon, Jaffery T. *Post-Postmodernism*. 2012. April 2017. www.sup.org/books/title/?id=21791.

Neilson. “The Negative Effects Of Television.” *Raw Food Health* (2018). www.raw-food-health.net/NegativeEffectsOfTelevision.html.

Okeke, Remi. “What is digitalization?” *ResearchGate* (2018). www.researchgate.net/post/What_is_digitalization2.

Olson, Karren. *I Pledge Allegiance*. 2007. April 2017.

Pruchnie, Ben. “The Guardian view on Muslims in the west: marginalised by mistrust.” *The Guardian* (2015). www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/sep/24/the-guardian-view-on-muslims-in-the-west-marginalised-by-mistrust.

Radesky, Jenny. “Mobile phone overuse.” 2017. www.punchng.com/mobile-phone-overuse.

Raja, Dr Masood Ashraf. “The Pakistani English Novel: The Burden of.” *Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 6* (2018).

Sandhu, Sukhdev. *The Guardian*. 2017. April 2017.

Sarsour, Linda. “Linda Sarsour: Trump’s Anti-Muslim Rhetoric Helps Unite America Against Him.” *Time* (2018). www.time.com/5124920/president-trump-anti-muslim-policies/>.

scriffignano, Dr. Anthony. “Reflecting on the Impact of Digitization.” *dun and bradstreet* (2017). www.dnb.com/perspectives/analytics/the-impact-of-digitization.html.

Stack, Liam. “Burqa Bans: Which Countries Outlaw Face Coverings?” *The New York Times* (2017). www.nytimes.com/2017/10/19/world/europe/quebec-burqa-ban-europe.html.

Stevens, Samual. “From the ashes of Postmodernism, a New Sincerity?” *From the ashes of Postmodernism, a New Sincerity?* (2017): 2.

—. *Sweet Violence*. Blackwell, 2003.

Tait, Theo. *The Guardian*. 2014. April 2017.

Tew, Caroline. "'Exit West': A Surreal Look at Relevant Issues." *'Exit West': A Surreal Look at Relevant Issues* (2017).

The Literature Network. "Modernism." *Modernism* (2015): p.3.

The feeling of being watched. Dir. Assia Boundaoui. Perf. Assia Boundaoui. 2018. www.feelingofbeingwatched.com.

The Melting Pot. Dir. Israel Zangwill. Perf. Israel Zangwill. 1908.

Thorton, Bruce. "Melting Pots and Salad Bowls." *Melting Pots and Salad Bowls* (2012): 5.

Troug, Dan. "Post-Postmodernism: Where Does it End?" *Huffpost* (2016). www.huffingtonpost.com/dan-truong/postpostmodernism-where-d_b_7451724.html.

Vonnegut, Kurt. *Breakfast of Champions*. Dell Publising, 1973.

Wallace, D. F. *Infinite Jest*. Paperback, 1996. www.goodreads.com/book/show/6759.Infinite_Jest.

Wallace, David Foster. "Hisour." 1993. *Hisour*. july 2018. www.hisour.com/new-sincerity-34646.

Wampole, Cristy. "How to Live Without Irony." *How to Live Without Irony* (2012): p.5. www.opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/11/17/how-to-live-without-irony.

Wells, H. G. *The Time Machine*. Signet Classics, 1895. www.goodreads.com/book/show/2493.The_Time_Machine.

Werleman, Cj. “From 9/11 to hate groups: The economic marginalisation of the West’s Muslims.” *Middle East Eye* (2017). www.middleeasteye.net/columns/islamophobia-why-muslims-experience-greatest-economic-disadvantage-1008062151.

Whytias, Will. “America, the salad bowl.” *Collegian* (2014). www.collegian.com/2014/02/america-the-salad-bowl.