

## The Duality of Emotions: Exploring the Protagonists' Detachment and Bonding in *Exit West* by Mohsen Hamid through The Attachment Theory

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### Abstract:

*Exit West* by Mohsen Hamid is an influential novel that pursues the journey of two beloveds as they embark on their relationship amid the invasion of their city by extremists, resulting in its devastation and forcing them to emigrate to Europe. The novel explores the convoluted and complex emotions the couple experiences during their journey, revealing their conflicting feelings toward each other. As they face various challenges and obstacles, their love is put to the test, and they struggle to keep it alive. Therefore, the present analysis looks into how the aspects of dual emotions narrative and character development factors. More precisely, It explores how these emotions change because of the traumas that protagonists witnessed or endured and how these influence their interactions using the textual analysis following the principles of the attachment theory.

**Keywords:** Detachment, Bonding, Emotions, *Exit West*, Attachment Theory.

## ازدواجية العواطف: استكشاف انفصال الأبطال وترابطهم في الخروج من الغرب لمحسن حامد من خلال نظرية التعلق

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### المفص:

” الخروج من الغرب “ لمحسن حامد هي رواية مؤثرة تتابع رحلة حبيبين حيث يشعان في علاقتهم وسط غزو المتطرفين لمدينتهم، مما أدى إلى خرابها وإجبارهم على الهجرة إلى أوروبا. تستكشف الرواية المشاعر المضطربة والمعقدة التي يمر بها الزوجان خلال رحلتهم، وتكشف عن مشاعرهما المتضاربة تجاه بعضهما البعض. بينما يواجهون تحديات وعقبات مختلفة، يتم اختبار حبهم، ويكافحون من أجل إبقائه على قيد الحياة. ولذلك، يبحث التحليل الحالي في كيفية تصوير جوانب المشاعر المزدوجة من خلال عوامل مختلفة ضمن السرد وتطور الشخصية. وبشكل أكثر دقة، فهو يستكشف كيف تتغير هذه المشاعر بسبب الصدمات التي شهدها أو تحملها الأبطال وكيف تؤثر على تفاعلاتهم باستخدام التحليل النصي الذي يتبع مبادئ نظرية التعلق.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الانفصال، الترابط، العواطف، الخروج من الغرب، نظرية التعلق.

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## 1. Introduction

Mohsen Hamid is a famous author hailing from Pakistan who is known for his work on important and complex contemporary topics such as identity, immigration, and globalization. He was inspired to become a writer when he grew up as a child in Lahore during a politically charged era. After finishing his college studies at Princeton University and Harvard Law School, Hamid worked as a management consultant in New York and London. However, his passion for writing eventually led him to pursue it as a full-time career. Hamid has written many wonderful works, such as his first novel, “*Moth Smoke*,” which was published in 2000 and acclaimed for depicting a young man in Lahore contending with love, addiction, and social issues. Hamid has written several remarkable works, including “*The Reluctant Fundamentalist*,” which explores identity and belonging in the aftermath of 9/11, and “*Exit West*,” a powerful story of love and immigration in a world ridden with struggle and displacement. Hamid argues in his novels about intricate social and political issues and defies steadfast concepts of identity, earning international recognition and reverent medals. Thus, his writing sheds light on how individuals traverse the intersections of culture, globalization, and personal agency in a progressively interconnected world. Mohsen Hamid’s novels exceed the traditional boundaries of postcolonial literature by examining the complexity of a globally interconnected society. His writings doubt the idea of fixed identities and examine how people navigate through the intersections of culture, globalization, and individual identity (Bauer 2017).

*Exit West* is a remarkable novel written by Mohsen Hamid, which was released in 2017, and it has received widespread acclaim for its insightful exploration of pivotal topics such as migration, displacement, and human connection. The novel’s depiction of these poignant issues has earned it various awards and critical recognition, including a prestigious Man Booker Prize nomination.

Its resonant subjects have sparked important conversations about the difficulties refugees face and the significant impacts of immigration on individuals and communities worldwide. The story takes place in an unstated city center that extremists have taken over. In this scene, the main characters, Said and Nadia, develop a deep connection that is the cornerstone of their journey. Faced with increasing cruelty, the pair choose to flee their native land in search of sanctuary and the promise of a brighter future. Mohsen's writing style is often lauded for its straightforward yet powerful language. It skillfully paints a vivid picture of the protagonist's emotions and experiences as they navigate their unfamiliar and complex circumstances. The novel delves into the characters' conflicting emotions as they paradoxically detach from their homeland while simultaneously carving out new connections with each other.

## **Literature Review**

The novel "*Exit West*" has garnered significant acclaim from diverse sources, including newspapers and writers. Besides these praises, academic researchers have devoted considerable attention to analyzing the work from multiple perspectives and examining a broad range of issues. For instance, the representation of homeland and personality is analyzed from the perspective of a migrant woman. April Joy Pequeña delves into how the novel portrays the conversion of the emigrant female's identity impacted by the various places, cultures, and circumstances she encounters. He also explores the concept of hybrid identity and how the migrant woman embodies it. In Pequeña's thesis, the black robe that the immigrant heroine is depicted as wearing is identified as signifying her hybrid subjectivity through the subsequent sections on identity diversion and hybridity, which serves as the framework for analyzing the novel that is provided by Consuela Wagner, Melody Yunzi Li, and Camilla Skalle. Furthermore, it explores the female protagonist's development with the male protagonist about paradigms of American society while the friendship the female



protagonist establishes with the male protagonist and the other immigrant women in the novel reflect her “split” (Pequeña 2019).

In Umer and Maryam’s scholarly article, the authors perform a critical analysis of women’s portrayal in the novel “*Exit West*” with a lens on Feminist Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis. This paper offers one of the most detailed examinations of how language operates to build up and tear down the figure of Nadia in the novel, and how different discursive tactics were applied. Also, the research focuses on the most essential topic of fickle values of feminism illustrated by the character of Nadia and how and in what way it aims to demonstrate the changes in the female image in today’s society and culture. It will discuss how the novel is significant in presenting a postmodern and mixed society and the comprehensive integration that displays the socio-historical processes of today’s society (Umer 2021).

Liaqats’ paper, the topic of migration trauma is comprehensively examined. The paper delves into the use of literary devices such as symbolism, metaphors, and narrative techniques to effectively portray this complex concept. Drawing from the established theories of trauma studies, the paper meticulously analyzes the language and literary elements present in the text. By combining the aesthetics of migration literature with trauma analysis in literature, this paper presents a distinctive literary analysis that can provide valuable insights to the academic community studying the trauma of migration (Liaqat 2022).

Mir and Khan analyze the effects of war trauma and how it can be healed through assimilation in “*Exit West*.” The theory applied in the article is the theoretical framework of Trauma propounded by Cathy Caruth and also discusses the connection between the language of literature and the depiction of trauma, as Felman and Laub advocate. The article discusses how traumatic experiments are intrusive phenomena where continuing repetition of harm is present with a delayed response resulting in the mayhem caused to a person psychologically.

Furthermore, it emphasizes the significance of recognition and healing through acceptance (Mir 2021).

Brauer draws upon Jacques Rancière's the theory of dissensus to examine the story's depiction of immigration as a political matter. As defined by Rancière, Dissensus is a political concept that refers to the disturbance of the existing order of things. Brauer argues that the magical doors in the novel, which enable people to migrate to other countries, embody a form of dissensus. These doors challenge traditional narratives of migration and displacement, disrupting the existing power structures. Additionally, Brauer delves into the role of magic in the novel, contending that the usage of magical realism allows the author to explore the emotional and psychological experiences of migrants in ways that traditional realism cannot.

The magic doors, for instance, symbolize the yearning for escape and the aspiration for a better life, both of which are everyday experiences among migrants (Brauer 2019).

Kelsey Madison Dietrich's article employs a combination of political and literary theories to understand global migration comprehensively. Dietrich utilizes Wendy Brown's political approach to provide a foundation for understanding the political issue of international migration during the publishing of *Exit West*. At the same time, Michael Perfect's literary theory is employed to challenge the idea that using magic gates to describe emigration rejects its connected struggles. Instead, the article argues that this stylistic choice normalizes the migration process and promotes sympathy towards all individuals who move for diverse reasons. The argument presented by the author is that Hamid's work eliminates the obstacles related to the migration process. This creates a world where moving to a new location is a viable and deliberate choice, empowering individuals who wish to relocate (Dietrich 2023).

This study uses Karen Horney's book "The struggle for self-fulfillment" as a theoretical framework to explore the experiences of the

female protagonist in the story. The research focuses on Nadia's journey towards self-definition through choosing freedom and acknowledging herself under Horney's constructs. The study uses qualitative research to examine how a woman's psyche can impact her entire life, starting from childhood. The investigation centers around the subjects of liberation and contentment, analyzed through a psychological feminist lens. The goal is to understand how satisfaction and space impact Nadia's life, and how these issues have influenced her psyche since childhood. The research is based on psychological feminist theory, which looks at how social structures impact gender roles in an individual's life (Mehmood 2021).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Attachment Theory was first introduced by the British psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, John Bowlby, back in mid-1950s and over the years, has received much appreciation and has been a subject of vast research in developmental psychology. This psychological framework is based on the complex interaction of people, where the emphasis is placed not only on the rational activity of a person, but also on the associative contacts and connections that are formed between individuals. In the present research proposal, several assumptions underpinned by the attachment theory are taken into consideration, for instance, a suggestion that early interaction with caregivers is instrumental in determining an individual's ability to attach and prioritize relationships with other people over other things throughout their lifetime.

Furthermore, apart from employing attachment theory to determine human relationships, it is indeed equally competent at uncovering literary texts. The described theory allows for exploring the depth of characters' personalities and studying the mental states which contribute to behaviors and relationships. For instance, within the novel "*Exit West*", the use of attachment theory means that the observer can explore the rapid attachment patterns of a protagonist and consider how the dynamic of disaster and mourning may contribute to further alteration of behaviors as the story proceeds. Additionally, attachment theory is useful in providing

an analysis of the more nuanced social interactions contained in the text by deciphering the patterns of relations described in the narrative.

Therefore, with the incorporation of attachment theory in literary analysis, one appears to possess a worthwhile method of understudying complexities of interpersonal as well as emotional bonds within literary texts. This framework can be used as a helpful analysis tool for readers as well as academics to understand the various aspects of “the ways we live” and our interpersonal interactions both as individuals and within the society, in contexts of literature and social sciences.

### **Exploring the Protagonists’ Detachment and Bonding in *Exit West***

In the opening pages of *Exit West*, a vivid depiction of Saeed and Nadia’s physical attributes is presented. However, this description is not limited to their appearances alone, as it also provides subtle yet revealing cues about their personalities and behavior.

Interestingly, Nadia’s clothing is a strategic tool for obfuscating her authentic personality and beliefs, allowing her to manipulate societal expectations and assumptions. By concealing her atheism, she can maintain a sense of independence and control over how others perceive her values and convictions. In sum, this passage not only establishes the physical appearances of the two protagonists but also provides a nuanced and insightful glimpse into their respective personalities and behaviors. Mohsen Hamid makes clear from the outset that the vast difference between the main characters and the duality of their emotions will eventually be reflected in their relationship.

“He had a beard, not a full beard, more a studiously maintained stubble, and she was always clad from the tips of her toes to the bottom of her jugular notch in a flowing black robe. Back then, people continued to enjoy the luxury of wearing more or less what they wanted to wear, clothing and hair wise, within certain bounds of course, and so these choices meant something”(Hamid 3).



The opening passage of *Exit West* presents an intriguing portrayal of the characters Saeed and Nadia. The author not only describes their physical attributes but also provides insight into their personalities and behavior. Nadia's choice of clothing is particularly noteworthy, as it serves as a visual statement of her strong commitment to her religious beliefs.

Even though her city has yet to succumb to the rule of extremist militants who impose strict dress codes, Nadia opts to don a loose black robe. This decision is a resolute demonstration of her strong sense of independence and individuality, granting her the freedom to express herself genuinely. However, even more, intriguing is that Nadia does not follow any religious practices. Instead, her conservative clothing serves as a guise, enabling her to subvert society's expectations and assumptions, conceal her atheism, and enjoy the benefits of controlling others' expectations and assumptions.

Throughout the narrative, Hamid illuminates the genuine essence of Nadia and Saeed's interpersonal dynamic and how it is inextricably linked to the circumstances surrounding them, such as violence and chaos. This leads to their emotional connection deepens. This interdependence between the protagonists increases when the separation between them increases. Still, their relationship eventually fails due to inseparability when they travel to new countries because that makes them together all the time.

“Dramatic circumstances, such as those in which they and other new lovers in the city now found themselves, have a habit of creating dramatic emotions, and furthermore the curfew served to conjure up an effect similar to that of a long-distance relationship, and long-distance relationships are well known for their potential to heighten passion, at least for a while, just as fasting is well known to heighten one's appreciation for food” (Hamid 54).

The following passage portrays the challenges faced by Saeed and Nadia as they strive to maintain their relationship amidst a curfew imposed in their city, which restricts their ability to meet at night.

Despite this adversity, their mutual affection intensifies, eventually culminating into a formidable force. However, their feelings for each other continued to flourish and become increasingly potent, almost like an unyielding force.

Saeed interpreted this as love, making their relationship more cohesive and robust through the challenging times. However, it eventually falters. The significance of this occurrence lies in the fact that their relationship does not thrive. Hamid subtly implies that their emotional growth is hastened by the unfortunate situations they encounter. He argues that the challenging conditions, which include violence and chaos preventing the young lovers from being together, result in intense emotions that enhance their passion. This shows that their refugee status influences Nadia and Saeed's love. Their connection appears to be strengthened by the obstacle that separates them from each other. However, when they eventually travel together to other countries, they don't face any barriers. Instead, they are compelled to spend most of their time together. This may be why their relationship fails; it was founded on the notion that they had to struggle to be with each other, and they were not ready for the sudden change in circumstances which made it easy for them to be separated.

Saeed's strong attachment to nostalgia can be traced back to his happy childhood memories and his innate disposition, which makes him more susceptible to its influence. In contrast, Nadia is comfortable with change and enjoys new experiences, showing less inclination towards reminiscing. The differing reactions of Nadia and Saeed to their changing circumstances highlight the fundamental differences in their personalities and coping mechanisms. When it comes to travel and change, Saeed tends to feel a stronger pull towards nostalgia, possibly due to his idyllic childhood or temperament. Meanwhile, Nadia embraces change and is eager to leave her familiar life for something new and exciting. These contrasting attitudes ultimately lead them down separate paths, as they each prioritize different aspects of personal growth and fulfillment.

“Nadia was possibly even more feverishly keen to depart, and her nature was such that the prospect of something new, of change, was at its most basic level exciting to her. But she was haunted by worries too, revolving around dependence, worries that in going abroad and leaving their country she and Saeed and Saeed’s father might be at the mercy of strangers, subsistent on handouts, caged in pens like vermin” (Hamid 94).

In this passage, Hamid highlights an essential contrast between Nadia and Saeed in terms of their attitudes toward travel and change. Saeed appears to be more introspective, often reflecting on past experiences. On the other hand, Nadia is more open-minded and curious, eagerly seeking out new adventures and finding them invigorating. While their differing perspectives do not necessarily create insurmountable obstacles, it does lead to some degree of tension as they embark on new journeys together. Ultimately, their contrasting attitudes toward change play a significant role in shaping the dynamics of their relationship.

Essentially, Saeed feels drained by the fluctuating environment as he bases himself on other people’s actions. To regain the memory of childhood and its peace, he begins to pray to get rid of the calls and connect with childlike memories. Additionally, Nadia is an advocate of the multiple facets of refugeeism. Of course, as the story goes on the couple divorces, and for Nadia this is like a fresh energy that matches her characteristic of being a change girl. This particular passage can therefore be seen as offering some useful details about the circumstances which result in the parting of a couple.

As the novel progresses, Hamid skillfully portrays the gradual unraveling of the once-strong bond between Saeed and Nadia. As they encounter external factors and inner turmoil, the flaws in their relationship become increasingly apparent.

Despite their initial optimism and aspirations, obstacles put their love to the test, leading them to a pivotal moment where they must decide to either fight for their relationship or succumb to the inevitable.

Hamid's choice of words suggests that external factors or personal growth may challenge the couple's unity and ultimately test their commitment to each other. The phrase "at that time" adds uncertainty to the future trajectory of their relationship, leaving their future together hanging in the balance.

"It was an easy promise to make because she had at that time no thoughts of leaving Saeed, but it was also a difficult one because in making it, she felt she was abandoning the old man" (Hamid 97).

The passage portrays Nadia's inner turmoil as she grapples with the reality that Saeed's father will not be accompanying them on their journey. In their final conversation, Saeed's father beseeches Nadia, who pledges her unwavering support to Saeed, pending that they feel. He also expresses his earnest desire to bond together they form a family. The author subtly alludes to the potential deterioration of Saeed and Nadia's relationship by noting that "at that time," Nadia had no clue about abandoning Saeed. This insinuates that there may come a time when she contemplates leaving, suggesting that their relationship is precarious and may be teetering toward an irrevocable split.

In addition, Hamid exposes the evident emotional detachment of the couple. The gap between them while standing on the hill indicates an increasing emotional separation, which reflects the physical distance they will soon encounter. As they stand next to each other, their thoughts and concerns differ, and each of them is burdened with their own anxieties and uncertainties. The realization that they no longer have the same viewpoint and bond weighs heavily on their hearts, foreshadowing the difficulties they will face as a couple.

"Saeed went to the top of the hill, and Nadia went to the top of the hill, and there they gazed out over the island, and out to sea, and he stood beside where she stood, and she stood beside where he stood, and the wind tugged and pushed at their hair, and they looked around at each other, but they did not see each other, for she went up before him, and he went up after her, and they were each at the crest of the hill only briefly, and at different times" (Hamid 108).

This passage takes place shortly after the couple's arrival on the island of Mykonos. They have set up their tent in a temporary camping located on a hill overlooking the beach. The duo decided to embark on a journey up the mountain to explore their new surroundings and take in the island's scenic views. It's important to note that they had their first argument before reaching the top of the hill. The fight happened when Nadia attempted to show her affection for Saeed by kissing him in public, but he moved away, surprised by the public display of love, even though no one saw it.

The act of standing separately atop the hill holds great significance as it represents the first instance in which they consciously choose to be apart from one another. Despite sharing the same landscape view, experiencing the same winds, and donning identical attire, they do so as individuals rather than as a unified couple. Such behavior hints at a weakening of their bond, even though they have recently departed from their residence. The island marks only the initial stop of their extensive journey as refugees.

It became clear that emotional detachment became prominent in the main characters. Despite Nadia's sincere desire to support Saeed, Nadia is disappointed when he rejects her because of their differing spiritual beliefs. This rejection makes her feel unwelcome and causes her to question the foundation of their otherwise healthy romantic relationship. The lack of mutual understanding and acceptance regarding faith strains their connection, leading Nadia to doubt the authenticity of their bond.

“Saeed did not ask Nadia to pray with him for his father, and she did not offer, but when he was gathering a circle of acquaintances to pray in the long evening shadow cast by their dormitory, she said she would like to join the circle, to sit with Saeed and the others, even if not engaged in supplication herself, and he smiled and said there was no need. And she had no answer to this” (Hamid 173).

It can be challenging for Nadia and Saeed to find common ground when it comes to their different prayer and cultural customs. It's important to acknowledge and address these differences if they want to make any headway in building a connection. They are currently facing a hurdle in their relationship as they struggle to connect over their differing cultural and prayer practices. Nadia desires to be a supportive partner to Saeed during this difficult time of grieving the loss of his father. Nevertheless, Saeed loses the courage to pray with Nadia because she does not have any religious views. To him, this means that the extent of her involvement in the prayer could well be less than genuine, which is another way of saying that he may be troubled by what he perceives as fake devotion. Nadia, on the other hand, simply wishes to express her kindness and care to Saeed regardless of the religious beliefs he has totally and distinctly from her own. Unfortunately, Saeed has shifted away from Nadia, and she has felt unwelcome, despite his possible discomfort with her. And as much as people like to believe that this is healthy for a couple in a romantic relationship, this is actually not okay.

From the above analysis, it is clear that the term 'unengaged' has played a certain important role. Thus, based on the conversation of Nadia with Saeed's father we can suggest that both Nadia and Saeed expected to get married at some point. However, Nadia has recently opened her eyes with a realization that their relationship may not last as long as she initially had planned. She is now uncertain if an engagement between them even exists, making the situation quite challenging.

Moreover, the way Hamid portrays Saeed and Nadia's reactions to their new surroundings highlights how people adapt to change in different ways. Saeed turns to prayer more often to find comfort and stability in his religious beliefs. In contrast, Nadia embraces the changes and shows resilience in adapting to new situations. However, Hamid also demonstrates how these changes can put a strain on relationships, showing that even strong bonds can be tested when individuals grow in different directions.

“Every time a couple moves they begin, if their attention is still drawn to one another, to see each other differently, for personalities are not a single immutable color, like white or blue, but rather illuminated screens, and the shades we reflect depend much on what is around us. So it was with Saeed and Nadia, who found themselves changed in each other’s eyes in this new place” (Hamid 186).

This passage describes how the couple altered while living in England and working in refugee camps. The emotional separation of the couple has become apparent. Despite spending most of their days aloof and rarely talking in the evenings, they start to view each other with a new objectivity. It’s as if each move they make creates distance, allowing them to observe one another from different vantage points. This is how migration can affect romantic relationships. As they adapt to their new environments, their personalities also shift. Hamid points out that characters are not fixed but are affected by the circumstances that surround them. The couple adapts to the circumstances surrounding them, and their sense of a kind of safety and reassurance deepens their separation because the factor of fear that used to bind them has ended. Saeed responds to his new surroundings by praying more and attempting to reattach with his past, while Nadia adopts the alterations in her lifetime. Hamid indicates that these conversions are normal, regardless of whether they are right or wrong. Conversely, these shifts can lead to rifts in solid relationships leading to complete separation.

Furthermore, Hamid explains Saeed’s relationship to prayer. Saeed uses prayer as a way to show love for things that have passed, things that are currently happening, and things that you could not love any other way. It should be noted that Hamid uses the term “touch” when describing his belief in the power of prayer. The text also shows that Saeed’s attachment to his parents and his nostalgia for past, using prayer as a bond between them, clearly indicate that the incompatibility of the couple’s relationship is due to their differences in religious views. Saeed still has the faith to pray and that he thinks when he prays he could be



speaking with his deceased relatives. It would draw the two worlds together with his religious rituals in which he prayed out of deep love and longing for his parents. In contrast, Nadia, who at heart is a secular girl with no sense of religious spirituality as Saeed, does not grasp the depth of his devotion and prayer. These differences in religious beliefs, therefore, go back to the one essential truth that the couple cannot work mutually mainly due to their contrasting convictions. That is the kind of worship, that they suggest, that can help people with the pain of having loved ones who have died. This passage serves as a potent reminder that we are all children who will eventually experience the loss of our parents and that prayer can serve as a means of maintaining that connection even after they have departed.

“When he prayed he touched his parents, who could not otherwise be touched, and he touched a feeling that we are all children who lose our parents, all of us, every man and woman and boy and girl, but he felt that he could not express this to Nadia, that he did not know how to express this to Nadia, this mystery that prayer linked him to, and it was so important to express it” (Hamid 203).

In this passage, Saeed believes that prayer can bring people together. He is drawn towards religious practices due to their ability to promote a sense of cohesion and unity amongst individuals.

Despite his appreciation for this way of thinking, Saeed experiences difficulty articulating his thoughts on the matter to Nadia. While not necessarily inclined towards spirituality, Nadia places a high value on connection and seeks it through multiculturalism and diverse communities. Though the two share a mutual desire for connection, they find themselves struggling to overcome their differences. Ultimately, Saeed concludes that it would be best to refrain from sharing his thoughts on worship and solidarity with Nadia.

In his depiction of the relationship between Saeed and Nadia, Hamid emphasizes their bond’s strength and their profound impact on each other’s lives. Despite their fading romantic passion, their love for one

another endures and transcends traditional notions of romance. This challenges the idea that love is solely based on intense desire, highlighting the importance of a deeper, enduring bond that can withstand the test of time. Hamid suggests that true love may evolve into a lifelong, unconditional affection that goes beyond initial sparks of romance.

“But while fear was part of what kept them together for those first few months in Marin, more powerful than fear was the desire that each see the other find firmer footing before they let go, and thus in the end their relationship did in some senses come to resemble that of siblings, in that friendship was its strongest element” (Hamid 204).

This paragraph appears just before the couple ultimately came to the difficult decision to end their relationship and pursue their detached paths. In this passage, Hamid delves into the complex emotions that are keeping them together. He emphasizes the role of “fear” in their decision to stay in a relationship, which has become a source of anxiety for both of them. In the beginning, their love for each other helped them navigate the violence and unrest in their city, easing their respective fears.

Nevertheless, the same thing that they once found in each other, love, is what makes them feel scared now. Such is the nature of their love, and as Hamid carefully considers their relationship, he decides that they are scared of losing each other, just like in love. This fear has become so intense that both parties have lost their mental and emotional health, mainly due to pressure to ensure their relationship is on, and they are both stressed up about the future. Because of it, they realized that they should both let go and follow their own way, freeing themselves from the constant fear that has been tying them down for so long. And even though it may not be easy, they are certain that it is the only way to end this strife, search for some kind of serenity within themselves, and rediscover their true selves. On the other hand, Hamid presents the reader with how their love becomes less passionate over time and how everybody’s love shows that not all forms of love are supposed to be of

the kind that lasts forever and ever. He suggests that sometimes love can outlast “desire.” and that the bond between two people can be incredibly strong, even if it doesn’t manifest in romantic love.

## **Conclusion**

In “*Exit West* by Mohsen Hamid,” there is no easy dichotomy of love and war, as the characters embark upon a journey that encompasses many forms of attachment and detachment. This aspect shows that there is a basic conflict within them: one part wants to retain one’s self, while the other part desires to form emotional bonds, which is a natural aspect of human nature. That is why, in the light of The Attachment Theory, one may conclude that their detachment results from the fear of pain which people can experience due to the loss of loved ones amid conditions that can be deemed as volatile. However, the connections which they make act as the lighthouse in moments of despair amidst aberrations. We can also note that such the characters’ behavior effectively acts as a shield which they can use to avoid the possibility of suffering and disappointment because of their earlier experiences of loss. They develop certain resentments towards being vulnerable and, therefore, stay emotionally guarded to avoid depending on others. However, their companionships and affiliations become strong pillars of stability and confidence enabling them to face life’s afflictions. We see the thin line between self-protectiveness, and the human need for deep interpersonal relationships masterfully portrayed. It again and again captures the tired old dilemma of how one can protect oneself while at the same time having this overwhelming need to connect with others and find comfort in human relationships in a world that can turn vicious at any one minute.



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