EXIT WEST BY MOSHIN HAMID REVIEW

In the present text I’m going to discuss the journalist Andrew Motion’s judgement and opinions about the novel “Exit West” and say if I agree with him or not, supporting my considerations with references to the reading activity.

Right from the title the reader can understand the two most important themes of the book in the journalist opinion, magic and violence. Indeed in the review he discusses about how these themes are developed and the effects that magic and violence products in the reader’s mind. From these two words the reader can understand that in the story realism and imagination are so close. The subtitle too gives the reader some information about the vision of the story Motion has: it is a parable of love, displacement and the search of belonging. This is a first positive judgement because it means that in Motion opinion the story teaches a moral.

Now I’m going to find out and discuss point by point Motion’s judgements of value. The reader finds a first judgement in the sentence: “Exit West adopts a tone of radical simplicity that borders on brutality and makes every conversation, every detail, every scene feel vital and under threat”. He repeats the word “every” to underline the constant presence of the cruelty. Also the repetition of the noun “threat” in all the text and the adjective of violence “outright” reveal that the journalist feels an incessant anxiety, tension, suspense reading the book, due to the simplicity with which it is written.

Motion makes a positive judgement when he says “the mixture of clarity and restraint in such passages is very impressive and confirms Hamid’s reputation as a brilliant ventriloquist”. Describing Hamid as a brilliant ventriloquist, he means that the writer knows how declare his opinions through his characters (they speak and act, but actually the author is speaking).

As regards the magic elements, the journalist thinks they are a sort of device Hamid uses to connect the different sections of the story, but they also product an estrangement effect.

The element of magical strangeness opposed to the plainness of the prose in which the characters are presented, induce us to think of the novel as a form of parable of hideous contemporary familiarity and strangeness. So Motion makes a positive judgement defining the story a parable.

The journalist ends with a negative judgement, saying that Hamid, counterpoising the horrors of the begin to the wishful thinking of the end, takes a risk because he uses the same style to dream of utopia after toiling through a dystopia.

Now I’m going to say my opinions about Motion’s judgement.
I agree with Motion as regard the incessant suspense and tension due to the simplicity that borders on brutality and violence, but in my opinion the suspense and the curiosity are also due to the vagueness of the description, as if there was a mystery. Indeed the reader doesn’t know the time and the place where the story is set, he can only imagine and create an idea through some advices the writer communicates. The suspense is given also by the instability of the situation narrated, indeed in every moment the war can blow up.

I agree with the journalist also as regard Hamid great talent to transmit his opinions through his characters. Indeed for examples he can show to the reader his thought about integration and how social damage will injure private lives through the two protagonists experience.

I agree with the writer as regard the consideration of the story as a parable, indeed it teaches us lots of things about love, displacements and the search of belonging.

While I don’t agree with Motion as regard the last judgement. In my opinion to believe in humanity’s potential for building a better world is the best reaction or response humans can have in front of horrors, so in my opinion use the same style to talks about the horrors of life and the wish of a bright future isn’t a risk, but a way to invite people to believe in human’s resources.

In conclusion to Motion and to me magic and violence are the two most important ways through which Hamid construct a parable of love, displacement and the search of belonging.