

Negotiating Fractured Identity in Hamid's *The Last White Man*: A Postcolonial Critique

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Abstract

Identity is the most significant concept in postcolonial theory due to colonization and globalization. The purpose of this research paper is to examine the theme of fractured identity and its consequences in Hamid's novel The Last White Man through the postcolonialism perspective. The plot of the novel is based on the theme of race and identity in a society that is undergoing a transformation. Thus, the story of the protagonist and the society's reaction to his change in skin color in this work of fiction reveal the issues of identity development in the context of power relations in the increasingly interconnected world. Conclusion of this research paper demonstrates that the novel is, indeed, a postcolonial text that deals with the issues of race, identity, otherness and resistance and challenges the dominant racial and cultural hierarchies. The Last White Man is a profound meditation on the postcolonial subject and an appeal for a new understanding of identity and society in the light of the classless socialist society.

Keywords: Postcolonial theory, fractured identity, race, transformation, power relations, resistance.

Introduction

Etymologically, the term 'identity' comes from the Latin word 'identitas', referring to the quality of being oneself or itself, and not something else (Kirkeby, 2016). 'Identity', which is a complicated concept, encompassing self, community, and a sense of belonging, is central to postcolonial studies (Nasser, 2019). The idea of identity applies to individual, community, and national levels based on culture, language, history, and geographic context. In postcolonial context, identity is commonly characterized by otherness or split as a result of the assimilation of the indigenous and colonial cultural elements (Ramirez & Munar, 2022). In postcolonial societies, identity transformation represents a permanent process of construction and deconstruction of hybridity, it problematizes the dualisms of colonizers and colonized, tradition and modernity and the Third World and the First World. The transformational character of postcolonial studies also investigates how societies undergo fundamental transformations in the quest of decolonization and identity reclamation (St-Denis, & Walsh, 2016). Indeed, in addition to politics and economy, this transformation affects ethnic and cultural identities of people to a great extent. This involves a rewriting and reinterpretation of history and culture which often leads to the revival of indigenous knowledge systems, language, and practices that were cancelled or marginalized by colonial domination (Sharma, 2021).

Mohsin Hamid is a popular Pakistani writer, known for his unconventional approaches to narration and for his probing explorations of themes like identity, race, displacement and the human experience within the frameworks of socio-political settings. His short, profound and often conjectural writing manner gained him the worldwide recognition and popularity. Through his novels, *The Last White Man*, *Moth Smoke*, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *Exit West*, Hamid has established himself as an influential writer in the modern literary world as he captures global issues with depth and profundity. In *The Last White Man*, Hamid proves his ability to reconcile

with the tangible existence and offer the reader conceptual space to think and ponder about the notions of identity, race, and belongingness. “This novel serves as a poignant reflection on the ongoing struggles for recognition and belonging in a world marked by colonial legacies and racial hierarchies” (Kazmi et al., 2024, p. 205)

The Last White Man presents complexities of identity, race, and belonging within a rapidly transforming society. It thematizes “identity in a postcolonial context”, and “racial transformation and its effects on personal and collective identities” (Kazmi et al., 2024, p. 201). Hamid (2022) creates a world where people suddenly begin to transform into a different race, specifically, where white people wake up to find their skin has turned dark. He touches on the constructs of race and identity, inquiring the deep-seated prejudices and societal norms that govern human interactions. The story of the novel centers around one such individual, Anders, and his experience of waking up one morning to find that his appearance has dramatically changed. Anders’ physical change leads to an ontological and social anxiety and thus brings about a critical reflection and redefinition of the self and the society. When the protagonist transforms for the first time, his girlfriend Oona feels a great deal of disturbance and gets disoriented. She cannot come to terms with him being in that state. Anders is in desperate need of acceptance through the human interface, but she cannot provide anything to him. He was white and people accepted him and respected him, but as he gets darker, people are prejudice against him and he is not accepted by the white community. Anders, the protagonist, has an emotional breakdown after his skin colouring turns dark. He has a lot of internal conflict regarding his new identity, finding solace in mundane tasks while at the same time experiencing uncertainty about his life. Thus, as the plot progresses, the reader learns that people with dark skin suffer from existential anxieties and feel like outcasts that are not acceptable in society. The novel leaves the readers with thoughts on how it feels to be feared just because one is considered to be an ‘other’. It also explores how empathy, mutual understanding, and solidarity can arise within such a context and challenges readers to rethink the rigid divisions of race and imagine a more expansive and inclusive human subject. When people wake up one day and their skin color is different, the confusion and self-reflection that follow expose the racism and bigotry inherent in today’s society. The protagonist, Anders, who is the victim of a newfound identity, embodies the fractured identity that is a central focus of postcolonial discourse.

Through the protagonist’s emotional journey and the societal response to his transformation, Hamid explores the violence of identity reconstruction in a postcolonial world, where the remnants of colonial hierarchies and racial categorizations continue to exert a powerful influence on personal and collective identities. (Kazmi et al., 2024, p. 206)

The purpose of this research paper is to analyze the theme of fractured identity and its implications in *The Last White Man* using the postcolonial theory, focusing on the concepts of race and identity by Fanon and Bhabha. It examines how Hamid (2022) uses the change of skin colouring of the protagonist to subvert and deconstruct the colonial and postcolonial racial and cultural power relations. He prompts the readers to re-evaluate their own understandings of identity in an increasingly interconnected society, by offering the traumatic and psychological impacts of transformed identity of Anders. In the latter part of the novel, the skin-coloring transformations lead to spread of massive violence in the town. Individuals resort to using firearms to rid themselves of their newfound brown skin. Throughout the town, a tense and fearful atmosphere prevails, compelling residents to remain indoors to avoid becoming targets due to their changed

skin color. Stores stand empty, streets lie deserted, and a solemn silence envelops the community. As the novel concludes, Anders embraces his transformed identity, and Oona also undergoes the change to become black. They choose to live together, accepting the new reality where everyone has turned black, eliminating any remaining white individuals. Hamid (2022) not only explores the profound impact of racial trauma, disrupted psychological states, repressed desires, and internal conflicts but also offers a path forward through acceptance and becoming aware of the unconscious.

Research Questions

1. How does Hamid delineate the theme of fractured identity and its aftermaths in *The Last Whiteman*?
2. In what way does the protagonist's transformation reflect broader societal tensions and negotiations of race and identity in postcolonial contexts?

Research Objectives

1. To analyze Hamid's delineation of the theme of fractured identity along with its aftermaths in *The Last Whiteman*.
2. To assess the protagonist's transformation as a reflection of broader societal tensions and negotiations of race and identity in postcolonial contexts.

Literature Review

Mohsin Hamid occupies a gigantic position in the contemporary Pakistani diaspora writers. His novels deal with the challenges, confronting the today's world. *The Last White Man* has been studied, analyzed, and commented upon from different perspectives. One can extract various meanings from this fiction as it provides a thought-provoking analysis on authority, sorrow, and changes both major and minor (Cain, August 01, 2022). This work of fiction is captivating, probing into a range of themes. At the core of the narrative lies a focus on racial discrimination and the challenges encountered by individuals of non-white ethnicities. It represents an imaginative inquiry into race and privilege, brimming with satirical references to unsettling transformations (Charles, August 2, 2022). The narrative of the novel incorporates numerous surreal components, recounting the tale of a Caucasian man who awakens with a dark complexion and realizes that his entire reality has undergone a profound shift (Preston, Aug 08, 2022). The novel illustrates the absurdity faced by modern individuals, who lack control over their bodies and circumstances. Despite these absurd elements, the novel also presents positive aspects that deviate from conventional norms. It conveys a powerful message to the contemporary world: we have the potential to transcend racial differences and embrace our common humanity (Whitehead, August 29, 2022).

In *The Last Whiteman*, Hamid portrays both the external and internal psychological struggles of people of color, reflecting a harsh reality of contemporary society. These psychological aspects are rooted in reality and deeply affect black individuals. It is accurate to assert that racism and colorism are not just social constructs but remain significant issues in today's world. They continue to serve as forms of oppression and rationalization for the harmful actions of white individuals. Racism, conceived by self-proclaimed civilized white people, has been linked to inferiority, fragmentation, conflict, and devaluation. The black community suffers from these issues, along with numerous others, with psychological disturbance being particularly insidious. The novel serves as a voice for black individuals who endure constant suffering, and affliction with Anders accurately representing these experiences. Hamid not only depicts these facts but also

offers a solution, aligning with Fanon's idea that overcoming such issues requires an awareness of one's unconscious to deal with hallucinations and psychological crises (Chaman et al., 2022). *The Last White Man* talks about the racial issues, and their effects on the characters. The conflicts on internal and external levels that the characters undergo are the outcome of constructed discourse of the white men (Manzoor & Singh, 2023).

Kapur and Naik (2022) argue that *The Last White Man* introduces the readers to an unnamed locale, where deep-seated racism and prejudice prevail. It centers on Anders, a white man who wakes one morning to find his complexion drastically altered, causing widespread fear and upheaval in the community. Anders faces racial biasness and discrimination based on skin color. The town descends into chaos, marked by escalating violence and murder in response to these transformations. Anders' girlfriend, Oona, struggles to accept his changed appearance, reflecting broader societal discomfort and intolerance. *Exit West* and *The Last White Man* tackle the themes such as escapism, racism, migration, and alienation. They throw light on the sufferings and humiliations faced by non-Western individuals in Western societies (Saad, 2023).

Baqar et al., (2024) pinpoint that *The Last White Man* addresses the theme of racism, depicting the mistreatment endured by people of color from colonizers or settlers who viewed them merely as tools for exploitation and subjected them to continuous abuse. Following the 9/11 attacks, racialization and discrimination against persons of color became more severe. The story of the novel focuses on how racism alienates people, causing substantial emotional and psychological anguish for people of color like Anders. Anders' skin colouring change emphasizes this estrangement, resulting in anguish and a sense of non-recognition.

While the existing work on *The Last White Man* addresses topics such as racism, privilege, and identity alteration from diverse angles, there is a significant gap in the analysis of fractured identity along with its aftermaths within a postcolonial framework through the postcolonial perspectives about race and identity by and Fanon and Bhabha

Theoretical Framework

Postcolonial theory examines and critiques the social history, cultural disparities, and political injustices resulting from colonial and imperial systems. According to Young (2001), postcolonial critique concentrates on the historical impact of colonialism and its influence on contemporary power dynamics. According to Bhabha (1994), postcolonial critique demonstrates the unequal and broad cultural representations that compete for political and economic power in the modern world. Bhabha (1994) thinks that postcolonial critique stems from colonial experiences. He adds that postcolonial viewpoints are rooted in the colonial histories of Third World countries, as well as tales of 'minorities' within the global divisions of East and West, North and South. These approaches call into question modernist ideological discourses that strive to impose a hegemonic 'normality' on nations' uneven growth and diverse, often disadvantaged, histories. Rukundwa and Aarde (2007) define postcolonial critique "as a dialectical discourse which broadly marks the historical facts of decolonisation. It allows people emerging from socio-political and economic domination to reclaim their sovereignty" (p. 1174).

Hoque, (2022) asserts that the prominent postcolonial theorists are Homi K. Bhabha, Frantz Fanon, Anthony Appiah, and Ashcroft and Griffiths. "A postcolonial text rigorously investigates and interrogates the themes and issues of postcolonialism. Postcolonial books generally deal with the issues and themes of diaspora, hybridity, national identity, subalternity, mimicry etc." (Hoque, 2022, p. 87). Postcolonial literature aims to analyze colonialism's impacts, challenge stereotypes,

and restore identities of formerly colonized nations, emphasizing continuity and transformation in addressing gender, race, and class subjugation (Tabrez, 2023).“‘Cultural domination’ and ‘Racism’, ‘Quest for Identity’, ‘Racial Discrimination’, ‘Inequality’, ‘Hybridity’...are only a few of the common themes and motifs in postcolonial literature”(Tabrez, 2023, p. 5).

Fanon (1986) contends that colonialism creates a harsh divide, forcing the colonized into a constant battle for acknowledgment and a genuine sense of self, a conflict that can be resolved solely through mental liberation and the establishment of an identity defined by themselves. He argues that both black individuals “enslaved by his inferiority” and white individuals “enslaved by his superiority” exhibit behaviors rooted in neurosis (Fanon, 1986, p. xxvii). He also suggests that black individuals’ complexes of superiority or inferiority, as well as their sense of equality, are consciously constructed and interact within their consciousness (p. 116). The contrast between white and black races generates a “massive psycho-existential complex” both within society and in the minds of countless individuals (Fanon, 1986, p. 5). Fanon asserts that a black man is “imprisoned in himself”, not by his thoughts, but by his physical appearance (Fanon, 1986, p. 57). The concept of ‘alienation’ describes feelings of estrangement and disconnection from one’s environment. People of color often define themselves more through their interactions with white individuals in society rather than through their own racial identities. They experience a sense of exclusion from the dominant culture, shaping their self-perception in relation to white society members. This sense of exclusion leads them to contemplate on their “alienation with reference to psychoanalytic descriptions.” (p. xxxvii). Fanon (1986) integrates these ideas in his seminal work, detailing the psychological state of black individuals who subconsciously feel trapped in a ‘vicious circle’ and face the painful reality of rejection (p. 88).

Homi K. Bhabha, on the other hand, introduces the concept of ‘hybridity’ as a critical element in understanding postcolonial identity (Bhabha, 1994). Bhabha’s work focuses on the cultural interactions between the colonizer and the colonized, leading to the emergence of new identities that are neither fully original nor entirely imposed but are instead hybrid, fluid, and dynamic. He argues that this interstitial space, which he terms ‘the third space’ allows for the negotiation of cultural identity beyond binary oppositions, enabling the creation of new forms of identity that challenge the authenticity and authority of colonial narratives (Bhabha, 1994). To challenge colonial dominance, Bhabha (1994) introduces the concept of an in-between space where the cultural interactions between the colonizer and the colonized occur, referred to as the third space of cultural enunciation. This space primarily disrupts “the binary thought and essentialist identities produced by colonial knowledge” (p. 276), breaking down the binary distinctions between self and other, colonizer and colonized, and East and West. Furthermore, this space embodies ambiguity and uncertainty, rejecting colonial authority and dismantling the notion of authentic and essentialist oppositional polarities (Bhabha, 1994). He explores “the psychic and cultural fault-lines which are generated around and constantly threaten, any simple ‘black-and-white’ distinction between two conventional parties to the colonial relationship” (Boehmer, 2005, p. 355).

As stated above, this research paper employs Fanon and Bhabha’s theories about race and identity for analysis and interpretation of the novel *The Last White Man*. Both the selected theorists share similar approach and stance about issues of race and identity. Birani (2013) posits that both Bhabha and Fanon explore race as a key element in colonial systems, emphasizing its role in social inequalities and liberation movements. Schwarz (2017) argues that they explore race as a complex

interplay of identity, power, and colonialism, emphasizing the fragmented nature of racial identity and its societal implications. They analyze race as an oppositional and subversive category, which acknowledges the splitting of subjectivity and a possibility of transgression over normative categories of subjectivity (Ward, 2015). According to Knoblauch (2020), Fanon is concerned with the phenomenology of racism while Bhabha deals with cultural hybridity and the complexities of identity formation. Both discuss race in the psychoanalytic theory. To Robertson and Walter (2009), both Bhabha and Fanon write about race in the colonial and postcolonial worlds of power and cultural domination, oppression of minorities, and the effects of injustice and Western hegemony. Schwarz (2017) is of the opinion that Bhabha and Fanon pay attention to the colonial otherness and the epistemological issue of identity that is fragmented.

Research Methodology

This research paper employs a qualitative research methodology to explore the theme of fractured identity and its aftermaths in Hamid's *The Last White Man* through postcolonial critique. The theoretical framework of this research paper is grounded in the works of Frantz Fanon and Homi K. Bhabha. The textual analysis, supported by postcolonial theoretical framework, provides a comprehensive understanding of the novel's engagement with issues of race, identity, and belongingness.

Textual Analysis

The Last White Man is Hamid's newly published novel, addressing the constructs of race and identity. It deals with "issues of race, identity, and transformation" (Kazmi et al., 2024, p. 202). The novel begins with a Kafkaesque touch, unveiling the following revelation: "One morning, Anders, a white man, woke up to find he had turned a deep and undeniable brown" (Hamid, 2022, p.1). His metamorphosis changes him into a brown-skinned reflection of his former white self, which is more disturbing than if he had turned into a monstrous figure. At first, he dismisses it as a dream, unable to believe he could become brown, but he quickly comes to accept the transformation as real. Upon seeing his altered complexion in a mirror, he is engulfed not just in anger, but in a sudden rage that borders on murderous desire. He "wanted to kill the colored man" he witnessed in the mirror (Hamid, 2022, p.1), and found himself "robbed" (p.2). Anders's deepening struggle with his changing skin tone intensifies his detachment from both the world around him and his own sense of self. When he ventures to the market for food, he experiences complete invisibility, with hardly anyone acknowledging his presence. This loss of recognition from society and himself leaves him feeling alienated and disconnected, as if he were an aberration, akin to "a sea creature that should not exist" (p.4). Even close connections like his girlfriend Oona and his dad fail to identify him following his skin colouring transformation. As the novelist remarks:

When he came out, she was surprised—not just because he was darker, but also because he was no longer recognisable as him, except from having roughly the same size and shape. Even his facial expression was altered, albeit perhaps it was dread on his part rather than on hers. (Hamid, 2022, p.11)

He becomes alienated from people around him. This skin colouring transformation highlights the struggles encountered by individuals with dark skin, frequently judged as unacceptable based on their physical appearance. The novel explores the challenges faced by these

marginalized individuals, who encounter limited opportunities to overcome their circumstances. The presence of a person of color juxtaposed with a white individual symbolizes the former's unrecognized and seemingly insignificant existence. This evokes disturbing emotions, normalizing even thoughts of violence towards the person of color. The self-perceived superiority of the white community significantly influences these attitudes.

Through *The Last White Man*, Hamid addresses the constructs of race and identity, questioning the deep seated prejudices and societal norms that govern human interactions. The novel is a meditation on the otherness and the fear that comes with being perceived as different, while also exploring the potential for empathy, understanding, and unity in the face of profound changes (Kazmi et al., 2024, p. 202).

Hamid (2022) effectively utilizes the protagonist's skin colouring transformation to critique societal structures and the inherent biases linked with racial categorization. Anders' journey is a reflection of the society's prejudice that one's worth, value, and social class are determined by his or her looks, and readers are forced to rethink their perceptions about these matters. In the colonial context, the colonizers dominated the colonized and discriminated against them based on their color and considered them as 'Orientals' and 'barbarians'. Likewise, Anders undergoes a shift in the way he is treated depending on the change of his looks and skin tone. He is a white man and is welcomed and appreciated but as his skin color turns black, he becomes a black man and is discriminated against and isolated from the white community. This treatment focuses on how the Western legacies perpetuate prejudices, painting people of color as other or savage. The change of color of the protagonist also brings out the aspect of privilege and discrimination in relation to the aspect of race. Anders, who had always enjoyed the privileges of his white look, is made to feel the suffering of being dark in skin tone.

Anders experiences his changed situation as a loss and recognizes the white people's self-perceived superiority over black people (Fanon, 1986). He struggles with the new reality of his life and tries to find solace in mundane tasks while questioning his life choices. This struggle is in line with the social constructs that portray whiteness as the epitome of morality and blackness as evil, inferior and immoral. It is evident that people with black skin struggle with existential concerns and they are not accepted by society. This resonates with Fanon's (1986) assertion that black individuals are often pressured to conform to a singular acceptable destiny--to become white. People of color are trying to become white in order to be accepted in the society and to be able to live a normal life.

Upon witnessing the protagonist's transformation for the first time, Oona, his girlfriend, experiences a profound sense of unsettlement and disorientation. She struggles to accept him in his changed state. Anders desperately seeks reassurance through human acceptance, but she hesitates and cannot offer any. After witnessing his transformation, she straightforwardly expresses her immediate feelings. When Oona meets Anders, she is "surprised herself" (Hamid, 2022, p. 5) by his new appearance and new voice. Anders's shifting skin tone compels him to experience the feelings of unfamiliarity and disconnection from his own sense of self, "it was not that of an Anders he recognized" (Hamid, 2022, p. 2).

Anders' journey in the novel parallels Fanon's descriptions, portraying a sense of internal and external confinement. The mingling of black and white individuals at social gatherings highlights the discomfort stemming from societal constructs about dark-skinned people. Hamid

(2022) depicts a world marked by chaos, leading to widespread violence and devastation as a result of transformed identity. As a brown-skinned individual, Anders experiences heightened fear and vigilance, despite no apparent threat. Fanon's concept of perceived inferiority resonates through the unease surrounding Anders' existence.

The protagonist's transformation disrupts traditional binaries of race and identity, creating a space where established norms and perceptions are questioned and redefined. This speculative narrative device, therefore, serves as a means of engaging with postcolonial themes of race, identity, and belonging, challenging the reader to reconsider the fixedness of these concepts and the social structures that support them. (Kazmi et al., 2024, p. 206).

The Last White Man focuses on "the serious sentiments of alienation and loneliness", and "bigotry and marginalization "as the consequence of transformed identity (Kapur & Naik, 2022, pp. 1758-1759). Anders, the protagonist undergoes an emotional breakdown after his skin colouring grows dark. He desires to cry, feeling inferior akin to those of brown skin, yet he cannot bring himself to do so in front of his girlfriend. He faces scrutiny and disgrace by all his acquaintances, with his boss even suggesting that if he has been present at work, he might have considered suicide. In this context, the dark color is unequivocally associated with notions of evil and immorality. Moreover, his boss represents the same societal insensitivity towards others' suffering, silently dismissing rather than comforting individuals in distress. The novelist emphasizes that the boss scrutinized him and remarked, "I would have killed myself." Anders shrugged, unsure how to reply, and his boss added, "If it was me" (Hamid, 2022, p. 35). The protagonist's personality also changes after turning brown. Because of his inferiority complex, he becomes more socially isolated and dislikes interacting with people.

Even aware that his father's passing is imminent, Anders feels a deep sense of remorse. He acknowledges that he is responsible for abandoning his father during his father's deteriorating health. Anders' skin colouring transformation strengthens his relationship with his father. After his mother's death, Anders avoids visiting his parents' home due to painful memories. However, upon seeing his father again after the change, he notices his deteriorating health and excruciating pain. Upon meeting his father, Anders perceives a sentiment of uneasiness on his father's face upon "seeing the dark man" (Hamid, 2022, pp. 51-52). Despite his uneasiness with his son's changed physical appearance, his father remains supportive, holding his hands and listening to his concerns. He quietly endures his illness while providing Anders with essential supplies, including a rifle, ammunition, and money, ensuring his safety and well-being.

And he went through his cupboards and helped his son load some essential supplies in his car, or handed them to his son, anyway, the boy would have to do the work, standing was hard enough, and he ignored his pain, for it was a part of him now, constant not remotely bearable, but also not avoidable, and so put up with, like a nasty sibling, and he retrieved a rifle and a box of shells. (Hamid, 2022, p. 66)

Anders comes to know about the deteriorating health of his father, he feels guilty for not being there during this crucial time when his father needed him most. This realization prompts Anders to spend more and more time with his father, fearing the impending loss as he had with his mother. Their relationship reflects a shared sympathy between a whiteman and a black man, underscoring his father's unbiased perspective amid societal transformations. His father remains

the sole white man who accepts and loves Anders regardless of his changed appearance, understanding that Anders remains unchanged at heart, mind, and soul. However, societal order and law begin to break down, with the police and systems failing to maintain public safety. Traffic rules are disregarded, reflecting a broader defiance against a failing system.

In the latter part of the novel, the society at large experiences similar sudden transformations. Consequently, there is a rise in violence and murder, illustrating deep-seated animosities between different groups. People use guns to rid themselves of their brownness, yet no one intervenes to stop this violence. The town's atmosphere grows tense and fearful, with residents staying indoors to avoid being targeted for their skin color. Stores are empty, streets deserted, and a somber silence hangs over the town. The author portrays deep-seated prejudices against those who undergo skin colouring transformation, linking darkness with notions of evil. Instances of violence, such as a black woman fleeing with her children from a pursuing white man, highlight the increasing fear and tension, marked by empty shelves and desolate streets day and night. Oona, curious about her transformed appearance as a dark-skinned woman, applies make-up to simulate this change and shows it to her mother during dinner. Her mother, who strongly dislikes the color black, reacts with irritation and surprise, as she has never expected her daughter to engage in such behavior. The atmosphere at dinner becomes tense and silent, contrary to Oona's hopes for a pleasant experience with her mother. Disheartened by her mother's negative reaction, Oona swiftly removes the make-up, illustrating the disappointment and disconnection between their expectations and reality. "You should be ashamed of yourself." When Oona responded, "I am ashamed of myself", her mother countered, "Oh no, you're not, but you should be" (Hamid, 2022, p. 101). Oona, devastated by her transformation and her mother's initial rejection, mourns the loss of her former self and the upheaval in her family. However, her mother's eventual empathy and support, akin to Anders' father's unwavering care, highlight the pivotal role of parents in protecting and understanding their children's struggles.

After turning brown, the protagonist undergoes a noticeable personality change, becoming more withdrawn and avoiding social interactions at work due to his feelings of inferiority. Anders experiences intense desperation and feels "triple imprisoned in his skin, in his house, in his town" (Hamid, 2022, p.51). The dark color sparks animosity among acquaintances and perpetuates societal turmoil, associating dark skin with lower social status. Anders internalizes these prejudices, grappling with the impact of colonization on his transformed identity. The growing societal turmoil and economic instability result in riots and violence, pushing Anders, now unemployed, to seek refuge with his father using their savings. Oona's mother perceives the violence as planned and advocates segregation to protect the whites, opposing the movement that has caused loss of the innocent lives. Hamid (2022) portrays the prejudice faced by non-white people, contrasting societal treatment based on skin color. White skin is idealized as sociable, enlightened and cultured, while dark skin is stigmatized as corrupt, uneducated and inferior. Oona's mother reflects this bias, supporting segregation amid growing tensions. Militants' aggression intensifies, aiming to eradicate brown-skinned individuals, resulting in widespread deaths. When Anders goes back to the gym after the leave, his boss' comments are based on racism:

To his boss, Anders explained his situation, which was not unique, nor contagious, as far as anyone knew, and returned to the gym after a week off, and his boss was waiting for him at the entrance, bigger than Anders remembered him, though obviously the same size,

and his boss looked him over and said, “I would have killed myself. Anders shrugged, unsure how to reply, and his boss added, “If it was me. (Hamid, 2022, p.24)

Anders always keeps his father’s rifle with him, a constant companion in all his activities. At times, he feels the rifle poses questions about his will to survive. Despite his own transformation to brown skin, Anders empathizes deeply with others facing similar changes. He wrestles with insecurities but remains determined to live, holding onto his intrinsic identity and resilience. The shift in his skin color weighs on his mind, yet he resolves to endure and adapt, recognizing the necessity to assert his existence in a biased world. He begins to think about other transformed people and how they live their lives, whether they kill themselves or continue to live. Anders is not a violent person but he feels that he is not capable of handling the difficult situations, especially after the death of his mother and the approaching death of his father. However, he does not lose hope of living on, for the sake of his family and for the sake of living on for himself.

Anders accepts the new change and becomes the black man, and Oona also follows the change to become black. They decide to stay together and adapt to the new world where all people are black, eradicating the last white persons. In addition to the themes of racial trauma, disrupted psychological states, repressed desire, and internal conflict, Hamid (2022) also provides a way out through acceptance and knowing the unconscious. This awareness is very important in the quest of attaining a state of serenity and stability in life. The novel concludes with a collective acceptance of the new reality where all individuals become black, transcending previous racial divisions:

[Anders] embraces his colored identity and abandons his associations with whiteness and it does not trouble more. Everything is all right when one acts as man who questions and thinks logically. This leads Anders to emancipation of these sufferings at the end of the novel. (Chaman et al., 2022, p. 1361).

Conclusion

This research paper has proved that *The Last White Man* deals with issues of identity, race, and belonging and their aftermaths. Hamid (2022) employs themes of otherness and hybridity to critique entrenched racial and cultural hierarchies, revealing the tensions inherent in the negotiation of race and identity in contemporary postcolonial societies. He shows the conflict, emotions of rejection, hopelessness, and fear that come with a change in identity. The change of the protagonist’s identity is a symbol of the individual and social challenges that people with concerns of race, identity, and belongingness experience. The black color of Anders makes people feel hatred and hostility towards him and contributes to the social conflict. These prejudices are internalized by Anders and he struggles with the effects of colonization on his new identity. Societal unrest and economic problems lead to riots and violence, and Anders has to flee to his father’s house. Anders has a very emotional breakdown; he is in a lot of pain. He wants to cry but he cannot cry in the presence of his girlfriend. He suffers public humiliation and disgrace from all the people he knows. By portraying the protagonist’s change of identity, Hamid (2022) reveals the existing phobias and discriminative perceptions of race and identity. The discussion of this research paper has shown that *The Last White Man* is not only a postcolonial novel but also an appeal to compassion in the contemporary globalized world. Thus, the novel calls for the elimination of the strict racial and cultural divisions and the recognition of people’s individuality and complexity.

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