



Social Sciences & Humanity Research Review



Postcolonial Whiteness and the Othering of Self: Race, Xenophobia, and Identity Disruption In Mohsin Hamid's *The Last White Man* (2022)

Zobia Mariam¹, Nida zulfiqar², Faiza Tariq³

¹Student BS English, University of Education, Faislabad, Punjab, Pakistan
Email: zobiamarriam@gmail.com

²Student BS English, University of Education, Faislabad, Punjab, Pakistan
Email: nidazulfiqar81@gmail.com

³Student BS English, University of Education, Faislabad, Punjab, Pakistan
Email: faizatariq12345678@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Xenophobia, Racism, Alienation, Race, Psychological effects, Colonialism, Racial transformation, The Last White Man, Mohsin Hamid.

Corresponding Author: Shahzadi Sumra, Lecturer in English, University of Education, Faislabad, Punjab, Pakistan

Email: sumra.shahzadi@ue.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

This paper examines Mohsin Hamid's *The Last White Man* (2022) through the lens of postcolonial theory, focusing on Frantz Fanon's insights into race, identity, and decolonization. It investigates how whiteness is deconstructed, how xenophobia manifests in the wake of identity disruption, and how the self becomes the "Other" when racial hierarchies collapse. Drawing from Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), the paper argues that Hamid's novel serves as a powerful allegory for the fragility of racial constructs and the psychological trauma caused by the dissolution of racial privilege. By incorporating additional insights from Homi K. Bhabha, Achille Mbembe, Sara Ahmed, and others, the paper provides a nuanced understanding of identity, surveillance, and emotional politics in racially fluid societies.

Introduction:

Racism is considered as hostility, prejudice, or discrimination towards people of other races because of the idea that one's own race is superior. Racism is a widespread issue around the globe that creates traumatic stress among people of color. Every black person must confront a typical racist behavior in daily life. The confrontation throws him off balance and challenges his beliefs about who he is and how the world functions. People who have experienced racial prejudice may suffer psychologically in their larger communities. Race is a sort of alienation since it is the process by which the subject's objectification mediates the unity of the universe and the Self. Some scholars are of the view that race is a social construct and an imaginative object. A person who is going through a direct traumatic stressor could be excessively patrolled

or might run into difficulties getting a mortgage because of unfair rules. A person who has had a direct traumatic stressor may also experience various marginalization or be the target of personal assaults, both physically and verbally. The idea of alienation is thoroughly examined by (Fanon, 1952). Fanon defined alienation as a psychological and social process in which members of oppressed or colonised groups internalise and undergo feelings of estrangement, inferiority, and self-denial. It is the product of a firmly established racial and cultural hierarchy that places non-white people below white people. Fanon contends that racism and colonialism dehumanising impacts are what lead to this alienation. Fanon demonstrates how colonialism creates a system in which those who have been colonised are denied their humanity and made to adhere to the cultural customs and beliefs of the colonisers. This leads to a fragmentation of identity and a conflict within oneself, as the colonized individual attempts to assimilate into the dominant culture while simultaneously facing rejection and discrimination. After the 9/11 attack, when Hamid realized for the first time that he had lost his whiteness, he wrote this book in that scenario. His view of race is that it is both a social construct and an imaginary thing. Jackson is a female African American author who uses a biracial female character to analyze the subject of racism. "One morning Anders, a white man, woke up to find he had turned a deep and undeniable brown" (Hamid, 2022, p. 03). Anders is a male protagonist in Hamid's *The Last White Man* (2022) who wakes up with a different skin color like in Kafka's *Metamorphoses*. He wants to punch the man he sees in the camera while taking a selfie. He refuses to meet anyone outside and confines himself to his house. He used to dress in hoodies so that no one would be able to see his dark complexion. He physically and emotionally alienates himself from society as well as himself. He starts staying in his room so that no one would assault him due to his dark brown color, both physically and verbally. His gym instructor claims that if he had woken up with dark skin, "he would have killed himself" (Hamid, 2022, p. 24). However, more and more individuals are realizing when they awaken that they are no longer white. Anders is put in danger and is compelled to run to the house of his dying father as the fear of losing whiteness starts to show itself in street violence. Mohsin Hamid focuses on how people of color, who are the utmost victims of the whites' inhuman conduct on a physical, mental, and emotional level, are perpetually submerged in the immense ocean of racial prejudice throughout their lives. People of color are viewed as inferior and uncivilized in American society. In these countries, racial prejudice and discrimination are at their highest level.

Literature Review:

Hamid's *The Last White Man* (2022) has sparked significant interest for its bold and thought-provoking portrayal of race, whiteness, and identity. Set against an allegorical backdrop where whiteness begins to vanish, the novel invites readers to question racial categories and the power structures that uphold them. Within postcolonial literary discourse, it stands out for challenging whiteness not as an invisible default, but as a fragile, racialized identity that can be unmade. Scholars like Richard Dyer (1997), Ruth Frankenberg (1993), and Sara Ahmed (2004) have long emphasized the need to expose and critique whiteness as a position of privilege. Hamid's narrative does exactly that, making whiteness visible through its literal erasure, and in doing so, forces both characters and readers to grapple with the constructed nature of race. Dyer's *White: Essays on Race and Culture* (1997) is foundational in understanding how whiteness functions as a dominant, yet often unexamined, racial identity. In *The Last White Man* (2022), this theoretical framework is brought to life through Anders, the protagonist, who finds himself treated with suspicion and fear after his skin turns dark. This transformation marks the unraveling of his previous invisibility and privilege. Dyer's idea that whiteness maintains its power through

systemic invisibility is echoed here—once disrupted, the social order begins to falter, and panic ensues. Similarly, Frankenberg’s *White Women, Race Matters* (1993) explores how whiteness is normalized through everyday language and behavior. Hamid dramatizes the breakdown of this normalization as more people in Anders’ world begin to darken. The resulting fear and confusion reveal whiteness for what it truly is: not a neutral norm, but a socially constructed and politically charged identity. Frankenberg’s insights help illuminate how the novel lays bare the mechanisms of racial privilege by pushing them into the open. Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) adds another layer to this analysis, especially through its exploration of identity and alienation. Fanon discusses how the Black subject is made to feel inferior and “othered” through the white gaze. Anders, who once held that gaze, now becomes its object. His growing fear, discomfort in public, and estrangement from his own body mirror Fanon’s depiction of racial alienation. As Saqib et al. (2024) point out, Anders’ transformation flips the postcolonial script—forcing a formerly privileged figure to confront the realities of marginalization, and in doing so, critiques the very notion of racial essentialism. Bhabha’s theory of hybridity and the “third space” (1994) also offers valuable insight. As Anders’ identity shifts, he no longer fits neatly into either white or non-white categories. Instead, he occupies a liminal space—an in-between state where identity becomes fluid and open to negotiation. Scholars such as Ali and Khadim (2024) see this as Hamid’s challenge to rigid racial binaries, encouraging us to view identity not as fixed, but as something dynamic and evolving. The novel also speaks powerfully to themes of xenophobia and societal reactions to difference. Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) explains how the West constructs the “Other” to maintain control. In Hamid’s world, this script is reversed: those who were once dominant become the Other. The fear and hostility that follow reflect real-world anxieties about shifting demographics and perceived threats to cultural dominance. The novel becomes a mirror, showing us how societies react when power dynamics are upended. Recent scholarship also highlights the emotional and psychological toll of these transformations. According to Kazmi et al. (2024), *The Last White Man* (2022) isn’t just a story about political change—it’s also a story of grief, loss, and disorientation. As whiteness disappears, characters mourn not just an identity, but an entire social framework built around that identity. Sara Ahmed’s (2004) work on emotion and affect helps make sense of this: the fear of the racial Other is tied to deeper anxieties about belonging, identity, and losing one’s place in the world. Comparative readings, such as those with Walcott’s *Dream on Monkey Mountain* (1970), further deepen the analysis. Both texts explore racial metamorphosis and the reshaping of identity as a response to colonial histories and contemporary pressures (Ali, Rahman, & Ullah, 2024). In these narratives, transformation becomes a powerful metaphor for internal conflict and societal upheaval. In sum, the growing body of scholarship around *The Last White Man* (2022) highlights its rich engagement with postcolonial theory, whiteness studies, and psychoanalysis. Through the motif of bodily change and the social ripples it causes, Hamid challenges us to reconsider how racial identities are formed, maintained, and undone. The novel not only critiques the privileges of whiteness but also pushes us to imagine identity as something fluid and deeply human—shaped by history, emotion, and the shifting landscapes of power and belonging.

Theoretical Framework:

This chapter foregrounds the definitions of the concepts and key terms of Fanon's Racism which is selected for the analysis of Hamid's *The Last White Man* (2022). It talks about the importance and significance of the Theory of Race introduced by Fanon. It answers the question of how the selected theoretical framework is appropriate for the textual analysis and how this research comes under Fanon's racism. The historical background and development of the theory are also

brought to light for the sake of better understanding. The basic concepts like Alienation, Psychological trauma, dehumanization, and oppression in postcolonial context along with their definitions are also discussed in this chapter with the possibility of their links with other disciplines to understand the concepts and the problem at a broader level. Fanon's theory is an appropriate theoretical framework for the analysis of Hamid's *The Last White Man* (2022) because there is a multiplicity of events and actions in the novel that are the subject matter of this theory. Fanon's theory talks about race, racism, and their impacts on the lives of people of color. The novel is about racism where multiple ideas are explored. The protagonist of *The Last White Man* belongs to a white community but as he loses his whiteness he loses his identity as well. The indifferent behavior of white people toward colored people didn't let them forget their identity as a black. While reading this fiction we also come to know the new forms of racism which are prevailing in every state of the United States. The whole society is contributing towards these things and the situation is becoming miserable for the people belonging to minority groups. This work is one of those outstanding fictions which talk about the issues of colored people in a true sense. This work indirectly demands the rights of colored people and is also a subject matter of Fanon's theory. In this way, the novel and the theory are interconnected with each other and the possible conclusions can be drawn using this theory for the analysis of the primary texts. Being a warrior was initially distinct from other occupations, and the experiences Fanon had led him to develop new perspectives and ways of thinking about the world. It turned out to be a prolonged, multifaceted journey from Negritude to violence. As Bulhan in his essay states regarding his experience, "Fanon personally experienced the suffering, the gnawing doubts, and the alienation of the oppressed," (Bulhan, 2004). This guided him towards new horizons where staying static while experiencing abuse and dehumanization meant that one was wronging oneself. He personally witnessed the European thirst for wealth and expansion, as well as the exploitation of the Indians in need. These factors had a profound impact on Fanon, and it was then that he understood that European psychology is an integral part of the process that dominates the mind. Therefore, he believed it was crucial to review the fundamental psychological presumptions and techniques. He is compared to Marx in this context and occasionally referred to as the "Marx of the Third World." He was undoubtedly influenced by Marx, and he used his theory of alienation to describe the existential crisis. However, it should be noted that he didn't always follow Marx's lead and instead occasionally appropriated him. In his article "Frantz Fanon- the Marx of the Third World," Forsythe (1973) writes that Fanon is a "Marxist," but a different kind of "Marxist" when considered in the context of colonial countries (Forsythe, 1973).

Discussion

1. Postcolonial Racism in the Last White Man:

Anders's character embodies the aspect of racial prejudice. Anders, a white man, noticed an abrupt shift in his skin tone. This scenario was the same one that Mohsin had shown his audience in *Metamorphosis* (1915) by Kafka. Here, the primary character is Andres, a white man who went brown over time and eventually began to feel uncomfortable about his look, particularly about his color, which had changed to a dark shade (black). When Andres looked in the mirror after getting up one morning, he saw that the face staring back at him was not his own. The reader is provided with a genuine image of racism in the United States of America, with a focus based on race, which was prevalent among white people. At the beginning of the book, we learned that Andres was a white man who was troubled by his abrupt shift in skin tone and who had been a victim of crimes and tragedies. Because he was the white guy who went black,

everything he held was stripped from him, including his identity, respect, and honor. His skin tone prevented anybody from recognizing him. Thus, Hamid has portrayed the racist aspect. As the novel puts it: *"He had woken up dark. And that was the first thing to come to him. That he was dark. And it was not the night that had gone but his skin had turned. A deep and undeniable brown"* (Hamid 2022). Another example from the text can be quoted as he was isolated from his society and his own people. One day when he went to the nearby grocery store. Andres recognized the clerk who scanned his purchases, but the clerk did not recognize him, and Andres had a moment of panic after he handed over his credit card, but the clerk did not glance at it, not his name, not his signature. So, one can say that in the lines given above from the text of the novel. We can find the element of racism based on color, as the main character of the novel is facing a difficult situation as nobody is ready to accept himself as he is now. Even he himself is not ready to accept the sudden change in his color so as the people of the society which prevailed in their society during the years of 1960.

2. **Whiteness as a Fragile Construct:**

Whiteness is portrayed not as an immutable trait in the novel but as a status imbued with power and privilege. The sudden transformation of white individuals into people with dark skin disrupts the societal balance built upon racial hierarchy. Anders, the protagonist, experiences immediate alienation and confusion: "He had become darker, undeniably darker, and his skin had a deepness to it, a tone that was not his..." (Hamid, 2022, p. 3). This moment reflects Fanon's assertion that race is socially constructed rather than biologically determined. Fanon (1952) writes, "The Negro is not. Any more than the white man," suggesting that both racial categories are shaped by history and power, not essence. As more people transform, whiteness becomes unstable and contested. This instability reveals how deeply whiteness is connected to socio-political dominance. Anders' personal crisis is emblematic of a larger collective identity unraveling, aligning with Fanon's view that the colonizer's identity is inseparable from the colonial system that sustains it.

3. **Xenophobia and the Collapse of Normativity:** The public reaction to the transformation is marked by fear, suspicion, and violence. Those who retain their original appearance become increasingly hostile, forming militias and retreating into defensive postures. Fanon (1961) observes that "decolonization is always a violent event," while this novel does not depict a traditional anti-colonial uprising, it mirrors the colonizer's fear of losing supremacy.

This fear is inherently xenophobic—a dread of the unfamiliar and the foreign. Anders and others like him become the new "foreigners" in their own homes. The novel captures this when people *"looked at him with something like hate"* after his transformation (Hamid, 2022, p. 14), signaling their fear and rejection. The novel captures the mechanisms of social exclusion and fear of racial transformation, highlighting how racial purity becomes a symbol of moral and civilizational order. Fanon's insights help us see this xenophobia as a last-ditch effort by a dominant group to preserve their symbolic capital.

4. **The Othering of the Self:** Perhaps the most psychologically profound aspect of the novel is Anders' internal alienation. He no longer recognizes himself and fears being seen. Hamid writes, *"He felt like a stranger... even to himself"* (Hamid, 2022, p. 8). He no longer recognizes himself and fears being seen. This reflects Fanon's concept of epidermalization, where racial identity is imposed from the outside. Fanon (1952) explains, "I am overdetermined from without. I am the slave not of the 'idea' that others have of me but of my own appearance." Anders' discomfort

reveals the depth of his social conditioning—he has internalized the superiority of whiteness. His sense of self fractures when he can no longer claim it. His shame and anxiety manifest when he avoids looking at himself in mirrors and fears going outside. As Hamid describes: “*He began to avoid reflections... They made him uneasy*” (Hamid, 2022, p. 10). These are symptoms of what Fanon would call the “trauma of racialization,” where identity is fractured by the loss of social privilege.

5. **Alienation and Displacement:**

Alienation, a profound sense of estrangement from both self and society, forms a central psychological struggle in Mohsin Hamid’s *The Last White Man* (2022). Drawing from Frantz Fanon’s framework, particularly in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), alienation arises when colonized individuals are conditioned to internalize whiteness as the norm, thereby negating their own racial identity. Hamid echoes this psychological rupture through the character of Anders, a white man whose skin mysteriously darkens overnight. This physical transformation leads to an unraveling of his self-perception and social belonging. Early in the novel, Anders’s reaction to his altered appearance is visceral: “he had caught his reflection in a window... and seen not himself but a stranger staring back at him” (Hamid, 2022, p. 3). This moment captures the onset of existential dislocation — Anders is no longer at home in his own body, nor in the world that once affirmed him.

The alienation deepens as society begins to respond to Anders not as the man they knew, but as a racialized “Other.” His interactions are increasingly marked by fear, suspicion, and hostility. The psychological toll is palpable: “he feared going outside... he feared the men in the trucks, feared they might do something to him, to others” (Hamid, 2022, p. 68). Anders’s dread of white vigilantes evokes the systemic violence that often shadows racial difference, further emphasizing how social alienation mirrors internal fragmentation. This portrayal resonates with Tiffany D. Jackson’s *The Weight of Blood* (2022), where Maddy, a biracial teenager, conceals her identity to escape racialized ridicule and abuse. Like Anders, Maddy experiences isolation not only from her peers but also from herself: “She stayed inside during rain so no one could see her hair curl... a silent erasure of her Blackness” (Jackson, 2022, p. 45). Her fear of humiliation mirrors Anders’s fear of being targeted, both characters choosing invisibility as a form of survival. In both narratives, identity becomes a burden — something to hide, suppress, or endure — because society renders it dangerous. Hamid’s use of minimalistic yet evocative prose amplifies Anders’s quiet descent into solitude. His physical transformation is not just an allegory for race; it is a catalyst that exposes how fragile the constructs of identity and belonging truly are when racialized perceptions dictate one’s worth. Through Anders’s journey, Hamid invites readers to witness how alienation emerges not only from others’ rejection but from the internalized rupture of selfhood, a theme Fanon so powerfully theorized decades ago.

6. **Gender, Race and Transformation as a postcolonial Reversal:**

In *The Last White Man* (2022), Mohsin Hamid dismantles the illusion of fixed racial identity by thrusting his protagonist, Anders, into a state of constant visual and social flux. His once-white skin begins to darken, and with that shift, Anders experiences firsthand the marginalization historically reserved for those racialized as “Other.” Hamid uses this transformation to critique the arbitrary nature of race as a social construct and to expose the systemic biases that underlie modern society’s obsession with color-based identity. Early in the novel, Hamid offers a striking image of Anders’s new body: “his skin was darker, undeniably darker, a deepening tan, as though he had been out in the sun for weeks” (Hamid, 2022, p. 2). This change becomes a

catalyst for social estrangement — Anders is no longer seen as himself but as something "foreign," unrecognizable, and thus threatening.

The discomfort and fear that others project onto Anders mirror colonial anxieties, where whiteness symbolized civility and control, and darkness implied danger and disorder. His friend Oona's conflicted perception reveals this tension: "Sometimes he looked normal to her, and sometimes strange" (Hamid, 2022, p. 38). Her ambivalence embodies the societal conditioning that links normalcy with whiteness and suspicion with darkness — a dichotomy deeply rooted in colonial legacies. As Fanon posits in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), whiteness was historically positioned as the universal standard, while Blackness was reduced to deviation — a view Hamid deliberately inverts in his novel. Anders's journey unravels the contradictions of privilege and marginalization. Once a benefactor of white supremacy's invisible perks, he now encounters the cold machinery of exclusion. He becomes a stranger not only to others but to himself. "He thought of himself as having been purged of something, as having been made raw" (Hamid, 2022, p. 57). This metaphor of rawness reflects both his vulnerability and a painful rebirth into a consciousness shaped by marginalization. The physical discomfort and emotional detachment serve as metaphors for a broader identity crisis — one in which belonging becomes elusive and selfhood uncertain. What is most striking is how Hamid universalizes this transformation. As more people begin to undergo the same change, whiteness itself becomes endangered. Anders's identity crisis is no longer personal but collective. Eventually, even Oona experiences the same darkening, signifying a collapse of racial boundaries: "It wasn't just Anders anymore. It was happening to everyone" (Hamid, 2022, p. 130). The shift is not merely biological; it is ontological — forcing a reevaluation of what it means to be human when no single racial category dominates. This narrative trajectory finds resonance with colonial histories, where racial hierarchies were justified through pseudoscientific and cultural constructs. The colonized were framed as inferior based on superficial traits like skin color, which were then weaponized to justify exploitation. As Edward Said observes in *Orientalism* (1978), such binaries positioned the non-Western subject as exotic, irrational, and subordinate — much like the way Anders is treated once his skin darkens. He is no longer "one of us" but "other," feared and pitied, dismissed and isolated. Furthermore, the novel echoes the reality faced by characters like Maddy in Tiffany D. Jackson's *The Weight of Blood* (2022), where biracial identity must be hidden to avoid violence and shame. Maddy "stayed inside during rain so her hair wouldn't reveal her Blackness" (Jackson, 2022, p. 45). Like Anders, she is caught between worlds, never fully accepted by either, her existence policed by appearances.

Through Anders and Oona's physical transformations and emotional struggles, Hamid dismantles the illusion of race as stable and absolute. He lays bare the fragile foundations of color-based identity and exposes how deeply it governs social belonging. In doing so, *The Last White Man* does more than narrate a surreal transformation; it reorients the reader's understanding of race, prompting a reflection on the prejudices we inherit, internalize, and — perhaps — can unlearn.

7. **Identity Crisis in times of Transition:** The dissolution of identity through the lens of non-recognition lies at the heart of both colonial and postcolonial trauma. Frantz Fanon, in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), hauntingly captures the psychological torment of racial objectification: "All this whiteness that burns me" (Fanon, 1967, p. 113). For Fanon, the gaze of the white subject does not see the Black man as human but as an aberration — an entity defined by deviance and deficiency. This dehumanizing perception births a crisis in the Black subject, who is rendered invisible in their individuality, known only through imposed stereotypes. Mohsin Hamid's *The*

Last White Man (2022) channels this very phenomenon through Anders, whose darkening skin severs his connection not only to others but to his own sense of self. The moment of non-recognition becomes both literal and metaphorical — a rupture of the social mirror in which identity is reflected and affirmed.

As Anders's transformation unfolds, he becomes a stranger to the people who once knew him. When he leaves his house to buy groceries, the familiar suddenly becomes foreign: "The shopkeeper did not greet him... looked at him the way one might look at someone new to town, someone suspicious" (Hamid, 2022, p. 10). This act of non-recognition is profoundly destabilizing. Anders is not only unacknowledged; he is erased — his whiteness, once his passport to social comfort and respect, is gone. Stripped of this protective layer, he begins to internalize the social hostility around him. His trauma manifests in physical withdrawal: "He stayed indoors mostly, curtains drawn, light dimmed, as though he were ill or in mourning" (Hamid, 2022, p. 27). In this solitude, Anders grieves a version of himself that no longer exists — a self that was socially validated by his whiteness.

The reaction from Anders's boss further intensifies this psychological disintegration. The professional space, once a symbol of stability, now becomes another site of exclusion. Anders is subtly pushed out, no longer deemed suitable or recognizable for his role: "The boss looked at him for a long moment and said nothing, then turned and walked away" (Hamid, 2022, p. 33). This silence is more wounding than words. It is the quiet severing of belonging — a denial of recognition that echoes Fanon's assertion that the colonized subject is denied full humanity in the eyes of the colonizer. Here, Anders, once a beneficiary of racial privilege, now experiences the void that racialized others have long inhabited. Hamid's prose delicately navigates this crisis without overstatement, instead allowing silence, disconnection, and spatial retreat to speak volumes. The rooms Anders hides in become metaphors for a fractured psyche, while the public spaces that no longer acknowledge him reflect a broader societal refusal to accept difference. The identity crisis he endures is not born of internal confusion alone, but from the external world's sudden and total denial of his former self. Thus, Anders's journey is not just a surreal tale of bodily change but a profound exploration of racial recognition as the foundation of identity. In a society where skin color dictates one's place, to lose whiteness is to lose one's social existence. Hamid, echoing Fanon's critical insights, presents a world where non-recognition is both a violence and a revelation — a tearing apart of self that exposes the fragility of racial privilege and the deep wounds of exclusion.

8. **Racialization and Traumatic stress** : Racialization — the systemic process of ascribing racial identities and values to individuals based solely on perceived physical traits — is not merely a social classification; it is a mechanism of exclusion, violence, and psychological harm. Mohsin Hamid's *The Last White Man* (2022) presents a deeply personal narrative of this process, dramatized through the physical and emotional transformation of Anders, who becomes a target of silent yet persistent racial othering as his skin darkens. Hamid's portrayal mirrors the historical and colonial practices of racialization, in which colonized populations were dehumanized to justify subjugation. As Frantz Fanon argues in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), the racialized subject internalizes the imposed identity as inferior, leading to a fractured self and profound psychic trauma: "I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects" (Fanon, 1967, p. 109).

In *The Last White Man*, the moment Anders loses his whiteness, he also loses access to societal familiarity, comfort, and dignity. The subtle but brutal transition from insider to outsider unfolds in psychological terms. He becomes paranoid, withdrawn, and increasingly disconnected from

those around him. “He no longer trusted his reflection... it seemed to look back at him as though it knew things he didn’t” (Hamid, 2022, p. 15). This disconnect signals the beginning of his racial trauma — an unravelling of the self under the weight of imposed identity and social rejection. The emotional toll of racialization is not presented as a single event but as a sustained psychological burden. Anders’s isolation is not only spatial — confined to dimly lit rooms and cautious public movements — but also deeply internal. The more society marks him as “other,” the more he questions his own worth. “There was a kind of heaviness inside him, something thick and cold” (Hamid, 2022, p. 40). Hamid gives trauma a visceral presence here, embedding it in Anders’s very being, evoking Fanon’s diagnosis of the colonized psyche as one marked by internalized self-hate and a constant negotiation with invisibility. This racialized trauma is not unique to Anders. It is echoed in the broader context of colonial history, where Black and brown bodies were labeled as biologically inferior, irrational, and expendable. As Edward Said discusses in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), the colonial subject was “spoken for” by the West, rendered incapable of self-representation or agency. Hamid reanimates this history through modern metaphor, showing that the legacy of racial violence is not only historical but present and psychological. The transformation of skin is less a fantasy device than a metaphor for inherited trauma — the lingering, generational scars of a world organized by color hierarchies. Racialization, then, becomes not only a social categorization but a tool of emotional subjugation. Its outcomes are visible in Anders’s disorientation, fear, and mounting distrust — emotions that coalesce into a form of traumatic stress. He is forced to navigate a society that once embraced him and now recoils from his presence. Hamid’s exploration of this shift humanizes the abstract violence of racism, revealing its deeply personal, daily repercussions. In this way, *The Last White Man* does not merely narrate a transformation — it testifies to the cost of racialization: the slow erosion of self in the face of systemic dehumanization.

9. **Interpersonal and Intergenerational:** Shifts As Anders begins to navigate this new reality, relationships become critical. His connection with Oona and his father shows how individuals adapt to, resist, or accept racial transformation. His father, initially confused, grows increasingly accepting: “His father did not turn away. He looked at Anders as if searching for something familiar” (Hamid, 2022, p. 67). This suggests the potential for empathy and transformation across generations. Fanon (1961) argued that true decolonization requires a restructuring of interpersonal relationships as much as political systems. The ability of Anders and his family to reconfigure their emotional bonds symbolizes a microcosmic model of social healing and adaptation.
10. **Surveillance and the Racialized Gaze:** Characters in the novel are watched, scrutinized, and suspected as their racial appearance shifts. This echoes both Fanon's idea of the white gaze and Foucault's notion of panopticism. The body becomes a site of political and racial regulation. Being seen as dark-skinned subjects Anders and others to the same surveillance and regulation historically reserved for racialized others. It also underscores the theme of visibility—where what is seen dictates how one is treated. The novel subtly critiques modern surveillance culture, echoing current discourses around racial profiling and biometric control.
11. **Gender, Race, and Transformation:** Gender is subtly but powerfully woven into the narrative. Oona's experience with Anders’ transformation is less reactive and more nurturing, suggesting a difference in how gendered bodies experience race. Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality can be applied here: Oona navigates a dual marginality—as a woman and as someone adjacent to a racially transformed person. Her caregiving role contrasts with the defensive hypermasculinity displayed by militia men, highlighting gendered responses to racial crisis.

12. **Toward a Post-Racial Possibility:** The novel closes with the idea that racial distinctions eventually fade: "In time, people forgot the way things had been" (Hamid, 2022, p. 183). While idealistic, this ending envisions a future beyond race, echoing Fanon's hope: "I want the world to recognize me, and to recognize me without shrinking from me" (Fanon, 1952). This post-racial vision is not achieved through violence but through gradual transformation and forgetting—a controversial but imaginative take on Fanon's call for a new humanism. Hamid proposes that identity can evolve beyond colonial binaries, provided there is openness to change and solidarity across difference.

Conclusion: The Last White Man by Mohsin Hamid offers a nuanced and deeply symbolic meditation on race, identity, and transformation. Through the lens of Frantz Fanon's postcolonial theories, and supported by broader critical voices, the novel becomes a powerful critique of the constructedness of whiteness, the pervasive fear of the Other, and the psychological consequences of disrupted identity. Hamid reimagines racial transformation not as annihilation but as potential rebirth. By imagining a world where race dissolves, The Last White Man compels readers to confront their own attachments to racialized identity and challenges them to envision new forms of human solidarity.

References:

Fanon, F. (2008). *Black skin, white masks* (R. Philcox, Trans.). Grove press. (Original work published 1952)

Ahmed, S. (2004). *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Edinburgh University Press.

Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. Routledge.

Crenshaw, K. (1991). *Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color*. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241-1299.

Fanon, F. (1952). *Black Skin, White Masks* (C. L. Markmann, Trans.). Grove Press.

Fanon, F. (1961). *The Wretched of the Earth* (R. Philcox, Trans.). Grove Press.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Pantheon Books.

Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Sage.

Hamid, M. (2022). *The Last White Man*. Riverhead Books.

Mbembe, A. (2011). *The idea of a borderless world*. *The Johannesburg Salon*, 4, 21-30.

Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. Vintage Books.

Shamsie, K. (2022, August 5). *On transformation*. *The Guardian*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/aug/05/mohsin-hamid-last-white-man-review>