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**The Issue of Whiteness in Mohsin Hamid's *The Last White Man*
(2022)**

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the Requirement for an **M.A. Degree in English Literature and Civilization**

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Dedication

This work is dedicated

To my family for their considerable support

To my sister Hala to whom I owe encouragement and inspiration

To every student who is caught between education and profession

Yassmine

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my dear family: father, mother, and siblings

Lyakout

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the issue of whiteness in Mohsin Hamid's novel *The Last White Man* (2022). The novel explores the dilemma of whiteness as it is portrayed by the author within the American community. The analysis, therefore, borrows the concepts of Otherness, Cultural Difference, Ambivalence, and Mimicry as explained by the theorist Homi. K Bhabha to analyze the characters' self-responses on the one hand and the reaction of the surrounding others' views to the loss of whiteness on the other hand. Whiteness is among the racial signs of disparity that emerged in America to establish dominance and maintain social control over the minorities. It was displayed as a tool to construct racial hierarchy. It has perpetuated systematic inequalities by guaranteeing privileges and advantages to white individuals while deliberately oppressing and excluding people of color as Mohsin Hamid's novel implicitly shows and this present dissertation clearly states.

Key Words: Whiteness, Otherness, Cultural Difference, Ambivalence, Mimicry.

List of Abbreviations

TLWM: The Last White Man

PEL: Pakistani English Literature

General Introduction

General Introduction

Modern-day racial dilemmas are treated in different literary works. Many writers pinpointed racial issues, among them, the Pakistani Mohsin Hamid, who witnessed a special experience of its kind concerning whiteness and racial differences. Thus, Hamid brings this experience into discussion. Our study seeks to demonstrate how race and whiteness continue to affect people's identities as well as how cultural differences have given rise to an ambivalent interaction between individuals belonging to different racial groupings. The basic goal of this study is to expose the effects of whiteness on dark and white people.

Race had been a significant sociological theme that centered on the human classification system which was in essence socially constructed to distinguish between groups of people who share a certain set of biological traits. (Ray, DeLoach). However, this latter has developed and changed affected by the ongoing shifts in political conditions. The term race has undergone a number of moderations in its significance since its first use until contemporary times. The dawn seaborne empire, the conquest of the Americas, the spread of euro-colonial rule across the world, the development of Darwinism, and the Western slavery of Africans in America were the major historical events that played a major role in shaping the idea of white racial superiority.

The dogma of white supremacy was reinforced and perfected in the late 19th century in the age of high imperialism. With the first steps of the industrial revolution, the European ability to dominate created sharp divisions of prestige and power (Pavanova 99). Throughout time, the assumption of biological white supremacy of the Europeans was perfected by the development of the assumption of the White Man's Burden. It stands for civilizing and providing tutelage and protection to brown and black-skinned people which comes through colonialism, servitude, subjection, and exclusion to different races and nations. The concept of

the white man's burden spreading civilization is related to racial superiority, an active superiority (Lewis 16). Thus whiteness is perceived as a force of domination, authority, and subjugation. One of the original backdrops for the construction of universal conceptions of Western superiority and control over the other or the Orient was the colonial setting.

This novel was chosen as the primary corpus for the current study because it complements the field of investigation and demonstrates how whiteness affects people's identities. It addresses the suffering of persons with dark skin in America following the 9/11 events. *The Last White Man*, a recently written novel, was a response to the writer's experience after the September 11 attacks. Hamid, in his interview, states that: "I wasn't white, but I was, you could say, white enough." (Preston) After the September 11th attacks, he questioned his whiteness that he used to have partial membership to. Hamid lost the benefits of his whiteness. Therefore, he creates a new fictional approach to implicitly tackle this matter. In this regard, this study tends to reveal the impacts of whiteness on people living in a multicultural milieu.

A set of objectives are determined in this work. This research provides the reader with an overview of racial issues in the contemporary Pakistani literature. It also explains the most known concepts of the Postcolonial theory such as Otherness, Cultural Difference, Ambivalence, and Mimicry. In addition to that, it attempts to provide an insight into dark-people intricacies and the challenges they undergo in America. Moreover, this study aims to analyze and investigate the theme of whiteness bearing in mind the contemporary postcolonial world and the hybrid nations with lenses afforded by the Postcolonial theory in the light of Homi K. Bhabha's concepts above mentioned through the analysis of *The Last White Man*, (*TLWM*).

This dissertation attempts to answer the main questions of how the issue of whiteness is portrayed in Hamid's novel. In order to conduct our research, we will address the following questions:

- How does Hamid picture the experience of dark-skinned people in a multicultural context?
- How does whiteness affect dark-skinned people's identity basically, and whites accordingly?
- To what extent does the writer construct the issue of otherness, cultural difference, ambivalence, and mimicry in the novel?

To the best of our knowledge, there are not many academic critiques or documentation available for Hamid's recently released work with the exception of a few reviews. Those reviews, however, were unable to identify how race and whiteness affected both dark and white people.

Since the current study will discuss, consider, and interpret the problem of whiteness in the chosen characters of the novel, it will be founded on the postcolonial theory. This theory is chosen because it enables us to study Hamid's work effectively since it deals with postcolonial themes that are now intertwined with the present and are manifested in the whiteness and brownness discourse. So, Bhabha's concepts of Otherness, Cultural Difference, Ambivalence, and Mimicry are used to scrutinize the issues of distorted identity in the selected novel.

This research is divided into two main chapters. The first one is about the literary, sociohistorical context of the novel and the theoretical framework of the study. The first section is concerned with an overview of the contemporary Pakistani literature. This part focuses on its origins, the way in which it has flourished over time, its recurrent themes, and

the major authors who have shaped this field while giving more space to the themes that are relevant to the present dissertation. In doing so, it introduces the author of the chosen novel by providing his biography and his literary influences. Then, the summary and the sociohistorical background of the novel *TLWM* are provided. The second section is devoted to discussing the most important concepts of postcolonial theory as developed by Homi K. Bhabha and that are used in the second chapter of our analysis. The second chapter aims at analyzing the characters of the novel through the lens of Bhabha's postcolonial concepts; Otherness, Cultural Difference, Ambivalence, and Mimicry.

Chapter One

Literary, Historical and Theoretical Background of the Study

Chapter One

Literary, Historical, and Theoretical Background of the Study

Introduction

Race has been a predominant subject in the field of literature. Post-colonial writers shed light on this theme in terms of racial differences that induce racial issues. The wake of Neo-Orientalism and the wave of Islamophobia on account of the 9/11 attacks in the U.S., brought to the surface once more white privilege and superiority at the expense of brown oppression and inferiority. Pakistani English Literature is one of the genres that explored the dilemma of whiteness among these racial issues, and its impact on brown-skinned people.

This chapter serves as a historical and theoretical examination that attempts to provide a historical overview of Pakistani English Literature since the present study pertains to this field focusing on the novel form. Moreover, this chapter introduces Mohsin Hamid as a contemporary Pakistani English writer by referring to his biography, bibliography, and literary influences. Then, we will introduce his novel *The Last White Man* by offering its summary and the socio-historical background in which it was sketched. Furthermore, this chapter briefly reviews Homi K. Bhabha's main postcolonial concepts of Otherness, Cultural Difference, Ambivalence, and Mimicry that shall be used in the second chapter to analyze Mohsin Hamid's *The Last White Man*, (TLWM).

1. Pakistani English Literature: An Overview

1.1 The Emergence of Pakistani English Literature

In 1947 and after 200 years of British rule, the Indian subcontinent was split into two independent nations in a process called "partition". The Indian subcontinent was made of

several co-existed religions. The Hindus were the majority and the Muslims were the largest minority. Both political parties of both religions acted together to resist British rule. After the independence, a question was raised about who would govern next. Mohammed Ali Jannah, the Muslim League leader, advocated for Muslims to have their own homeland, which gave birth to Pakistan, a state established in the name of Islam (*Al Jazeera English*). However, the struggle to define national identity remained a stark reality. In the course of Pakistan's sixty-three years of existence, it has been called a "failed state". Pakistan's quest for survival has been uncertain. A state existed within a state volume up the dilemma in the trail of reconciling the goal of national identity and evolving a political system for its linguistically diverse country along with administering its economics (Jan 237).

Pakistan struggled for its continuity against a massive array of opponents and difficulties in defining its national identity. Politics and economy were not the only major aspects responsible for constructing nationalism. Literature was a significant companion in the representation of Pakistani national recognition. As the new nation witnessed a huge arena in its growth as an independent country in all walks of life, literature simultaneously began its arduous trajectory toward acknowledgment (Khan 6958).

At the time of Pakistani's independence in 1947, Pakistani fiction was distinct among the regional literature. The first phase of post-independence was the starting point of Pakistani literature. It traces its journey toward a new dawn of recognition and dual responsibility. It had to withdraw from the Indian literary traditions, which were already enjoying a remarkable position among the South-Asian works of literature, and address people's sensibilities, culture, and struggles (Khan 6959).

Literature in Pakistan was presented in dual languages Urdu and English. This returns to historical records of colonial times in India. According to the Indian critic K.R Srinivasa

Iyengar, the English language was established in that epoch by introducing this latter and profiling it in the system of education as a source of knowledge, freedom, and power. (Haouche and Gula 10). The bulk of Muslims of that time stood against the imposition of the English language in fear of extending British rule and domination in India. This led to the emergence of two opposing groups of Muslims, “resisting and rejecting” and “accepting and assimilating” in the vein of pragmatic civilization. (Rahman 122-123). With the independence of Pakistan, Urdu became the national language and the language of education. Under the pressure of the resistance referring to the country’s linguistic diversity, it was decided to officialize the English language (Sham and Syed 243). Seizing its position as an official syllabic language, the Pakistani literary scenes were dramatically affected. New modes of prose, poetry, drama, and novel in English came into view. As stated before, in a new-born country, established in the name of Islam enjoying Urdu as the national language, writing in English was challenging. Nevertheless, through sheer resilience and mobility, it could blaze a trail toward recognition as an independent literary genre and attract the attention of international readership (Khan 9659). This success owes credit perhaps to its essential quality in taking the reins in addressing national issues of the Pakistani nation and population.

In the sense cliché that literature is the mirror of society in terms of addressing its core issues, from its emergence to modern eyes, Pakistani English Literature seizes the position of a representative of Pakistani society. It provides a panoramic picture of the odds and confrontations the Pakistani population undergoes during a specific period. In observing the development of Pakistani English Literature (PEL), we claim that its progressive process can be traced and divided into several periods. Literary Pakistani writings witnessed a fair number of moderations in their themes by the change in socio-political and cultural milieu every decade.

Poetry was the first popular form of literature in early PEL. The generation of poets who wrote in English was highly influenced by the Urdu Progressive Writing Movement. In their lines, they attack social injustice and advocate equality among humans (Khan 6959). Soon after, prose dominated the literary scene. The novel became the leading form in PEL as it enjoys more power in displaying in a large-scale the society's agonies in a more vivid depiction. Consequently, most of the literary works produced under the scope of PEL were in the form of novels (Lukacs 93).

The historical tragedy that the new-born nation has witnessed has been weaved in the fabric of fiction produced in the Post-independence Era. Early trends of PEL covered geopolitical, cultural, and historical events. The period between 1947 and the 1950s was not full of strong literary passion. It has viewed a small range of literary works that mainly centered on portraying the saga of partition, throwing light on the religiopolitical trauma that eventually led to partition and the social issues that were triggered by this exodus (Munnzza 1).

The 1960s in the history of Pakistan featured the dilemma of the young nation in establishing its national identity. This period has known notable improvements in the PEL. It started presenting a balanced literary mode where a noteworthy increase in literary production has come forth. The writers promoted new styles, modes, and trends and began writing more cohesively. Among the authors who have given a big share in this gate are Zulfikar Ghose and Ahmad Farooqi. During this phase, Pakistan has known the emergence of Industrialism and the rise of social classes which induced social hierarchy, murder, and other phenomena. The novelists of that period were typical representatives of these turns in Pakistani society. In his *Murder of Aziz Khan* (1967), Zulfikar Ghose displays the hatred showered by greed in a land succession game (*School of Literature*). Ahmad Farooqi in his novel *Faces of Love and Death*

(1961) on an identical verge, highlights many contemporary political roughs by portraying the backdrops of colonial rule in the society. His second novel *Snake at the Ladder* (1967) drops in the same axe where he evokes the bureaucrats' lust for power and control. The novels were sketched in this era providing a picture of realism centering on the elite lifestyle and few literary endeavors were dedicated to the middle and lower classes. Though the literary trends of this time were considered immature, they were the ladder that led to the maturity of the themes of the lurching periods (Munnzza 3).

The following decade in the Pakistani archive has endured a crucial loss on its part. Eastern Pakistan, modern-day Bangladesh becomes sovereign in response to the Bengali Nationalist Movement. The fiction of this era was thoroughly disturbed. The 1970s have seen the evolution of Traik Ali who tackled the topic of politics in Pakistan more firmly and visibly. In his *Pakistan: Military Rule of People's Power* (1970), he brings to the scene the explosive politics of Pakistan since its formation in 1947. It focused on how the Muslim League furthered its bourgeoisie leadership that formulates the series of binaries of East West Pakistan and the dominant subject that existed in the layers of Pakistani society. All the novels penned at this time drop in the same stream of mirroring the socio-political and religious upheavals. Despite the unsettled atmosphere, the literary zest remained alive and could achieve maturity in its themes (Munnaza 4-5).

The decrease in the readership in this decade was the outcome of the population detachment who grew uninterested in the post-independence themes that have been tackled repeatedly in all forms of fiction. Pakistani literature continued to address the themes of the early years of independence until the 1980s. Swayed by the twist in the geo-political and socio-economic events during the 1980s exerted influence on the themes of PEL. It took a shift to bear contemporary concerns such as external and internal terrorism, feminism, and

neo-nationalism. The newly emerged setting anticipated a trio of modern, postmodern, and postcolonial literature. Many critics assume that PEL has developed into a “Janus-face” nature as it has been performing double culpability. On the one hand, it copes with internal national issues, on the other hand; the writers used their pens to dig out the muddle of the negative portrayal of the country in international literary platforms (Khan 6962- 6963). In the course of the aftermath of colonialism and the wake of Orientalism that sown the seed of inferiority and constructed a peripheral and marginal representation of the Muslim Community, Pakistani English writers were influenced by postcolonial historians such as Frantz Fanon and Edward Said. Hence, they dedicated a significant volume of discourse to write back and represent their country and display a soft and peaceful image of it. Mohamed Hanif is the prominent speaker of this concern whose writings were considered as a strategy of liberation from Western misrepresentation of the Muslim Pakistani population. Feminism as well took a huge part in this age. The novels revolve around male domination and the sexual humiliation of agrarian Muslim women in Pakistan (Hassan 126-130).

Since Pakistan is a multicultural milieu, PEL evolved mainly by the Pakistani writers in Diaspora. Under this scope, Samantara clarifies that “the rise of Pakistani English Literature, chronicle Saadat Hassan Monto and then spanning to all the Anglophone writers” (Hajiyeva 136). The dilemma of identity haunted again the spirits of Pakistani English writers in the diaspora. Literature has been the witnessing eye of Pakistani people’s struggle in defining their national identity, an idea that was born in the process of establishing an independent government. The disturbed identity of the Pakistani population shaped the feeling of alienation and triggered them to search for a significant substitute of belonging. Contemporary Pakistani English Writers of the 1990s returned to penetrate the same terrain. Their writings revolve around retelling their experiences in exile, shedding light on the oppression and inferiority they encounter as Muslims and Orientals. In addition to exploring the

feeling of nostalgia and unbelonging that is generated at the account of a disordered identity in being originated from a specific country, culture, and race and living in an utterly contrasting one. This can be heavily viewed in this decade's writers such as Z.A. Suleri Sara, Ammar Hussein, Kamila Shamsie, and Mohsin Hamid whose characters depict identity crisis due to exile and its impacts, in the sketch of social discrimination (Hajiyeva 136-142).

1.2 Contemporary Pakistani English Literature

PEL has noted a remarkable swing after the 1990s. The writers of the post-millennium displayed a sizable shift from their predecessors in respect of themes, thoughts, and content. In this decade, PEL has known a dazzling diversity in its themes (Khan 6962). At the dawn of the 21st century, owing to the instability of Pakistan which had been a quagmire of social metamorphosis, political mayhem, and religious extremism, the literary quest produced a depressed literary mood. To some extent, contemporary Pakistani English writers have served as a prism to expose the present realities (Khan 6962). The early literary contributions of PEL aimed to refine the Pakistani image and resist the Orientalist generalizations of Muslim natives who recognize them as violent, conservative, and uncivilized. However, contemporary Pakistani English writers were unable to find this bliss. The picture of Pakistani Muslim society is described in their works as bleak and miserable. Through their characters, they depict Pakistani society as corrupt and immoral due to the elite class control who bestows murder and other phenomena. Evil, poor, and uncivilized were the sole interpretations kept for Pakistani Muslim community. This is highly apparent in the literary works of Uzma Aslam, Aslan Nadeem, Qaisra Shahraz, and Mohsin Hamid (Mehmood and Janjua 1-15).

The terrorist attack that took place on September 11, 2001, was the transformative moment that drew the new path of PEL. In Muslim-American relationships, Muslims were regarded as violent and lacking tolerance. The 9/11 attacks brought an escalating swap in the

dynamism of the American Orientalist academia. These attacks have been the figurative event that marked the American retaliation acts to reconsider and moderate the East-West Accord and the world political arena. This brought to the scene neo oriental academia. The war of terror brought the Middle- East and the Orientalist discourse with its binary of “us” and “them” afresh into focus. The newly generated representation of Muslims in Post-9/11 became more critical in terms of labeling Muslims in the icon of terrorists. The terror that was shaped as a consequence of these attacks put Muslims in a suspected position (Altwaiji 313-314).

Politics and military powers held sway to keep an open eye on Muslims in the U.S. As the Canadian Prime Minister said on September 6, 2011, “Islamic terrorism is the greatest threat to Canada’s security” (*CBC News*). Many ideologies and interpretations have come to the surface that regard Muslims as a source of threat and danger. The wave of Islamophobia or the fear of Islam and Muslims that has gripped Western societies was compounded by negative stereotypes, discrimination, and exclusion of Muslims from political, social, and civic life. In this vein, the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) defines Islamophobia as a “close-minded hatred, fear or prejudice toward Islam and Muslims that result in discrimination, marginalization, and oppression” (qtd. in Sunar 35).

As a phenomenon, islamophobia is considered as a cruel and inconsiderate attitude toward differences and diversity in society. Islamophobia did not only affect Muslims but also affected the world’s population who seem to embrace Muslim characteristics such as the brown-skin, language, or clothing. Ironically, non -Muslims such as Sikhs, Africans, Arab-Christians, and Hindu Indians have been targeted by Islamophobia’s dynamics.

Considering Muslims and people who resemble Muslims as the “Other” in the U.S. was a major aspect of the Western prejudices and suppression against them, which was not a

modern attitude. The oppression that came along with Islamophobia is the last link in the chain of long traditions of conflicts that emerged since 600 CE. Islam and Europe had a long history full of conflicts since the emergence of Islam (Sunar 37). As Edward Said puts it, “the Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe’s greatest, richest, and oldest colonies, the source of its civilization and languages; its cultural contestant; and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other” (qtd. in Sunar 36).

The PEL has been influenced by the turn of events since its actual shape has been formulated by the Pakistani English writers in Diaspora who have been accordingly tormented by the post-9/11 events. Contemporary Pakistani English writers turn their attention in this phase to evoke Muslims’ struggle under this wave of socio-political discrimination and marginalization. Authors namely Aamer Hussein and Nadeem Aslan in their novels *Insomnia* (2007) and *Where They Dream in Blue* (2016) respectively highlighted the issue of Islamophobia and its impacts on Pakistani Muslim immigrant’s identity (Shah).

The socio-political bigotry and exclusion showered by hostility and hatred towards Muslims and Muslim-like people brought to life a dangerous idea that planted its roots centuries ago and came to the public view a century ago at the lurching of postcolonial discourse that dusted off the colonial and Western racial discrimination. Whiteness has been revived and introduced by the sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois through his social critics. In his essay “The Soul of White Folk” (1920), he proposed that what still defines and penetrates the insight of racial identity in modern days is Whiteness. He notes that “the discovery of personal whiteness among the world’s people is a very modern thing, a nineteenth and twentieth-century matter, indeed.” (qtd. in Baird). Du Bois in what he called the “New Religion of Whiteness” insists that racial categorization like whiteness is related to religious belief in addition to biological traits. He pinpoints that race is the predominant feature in the

social division of the human species. Du Bois moreover tackled the white privilege and superiority in modern societies. In this context, he stated, “Of all the hues of gods, whiteness alone is inherently and obviously better than brownness and tan.” (qtd. in Baird)). Islamophobia accordingly, strengthened and perfected white privilege at the expense of brown-skinned Muslims. This induced paranoia and anxiety in the souls of brown-skinned people who wished to return to white to enjoy privilege, superiority, and above all security away from the pointed fingers of suspects and to escape all sorts of discrimination.

A large number of contemporary Pakistani English writers addressed the issue of whiteness in their literary endeavors as Adam Zameenzad in his novel *A Gorgeous White Female* (2020). Another example of contemporary Pakistani English writers who through their literary text cast the experiences of browns in the American community. In addition to exploring the issue of whiteness and the white privilege status that is accompanied by othering and the browns minority is Mohsin Hamid’s novel *The Last White Man* which issues are under study in this research.

2. About the Author and the Novel

2.1 The Biography and the Bibliography of Mohsin Hamid

Mohsin Hamid was born on July 23rd, 1971, in Lahore, Pakistan. He spent his childhood in the United States where his father was a professor and a graduate student at Stanford. Hamid received his early education at the Lahore American School in Pakistan. When he was 18 years old, he went back to the United States to continue his higher studies. Hamid obtained his admission from Princeton University. He completed his studies with the highest grades in 1993 (Aljibori 12).

Hamid was lucky to be conducted by highly qualified authors such as Toni Morrison, who offered him the chance to develop his writing skills. This motivated him to write the draft of his first novel. After his graduation, he returned to Pakistan where he dedicated his time to writing. In 1997, he left for the United States to finish his law studies at Harvard. To support student life, he obtained a job at McKinsey & Company in New York. He worked as a management consultant. He took a few days off to finish his novel. After that, He moved to London in 2001. He stayed until he obtained British citizenship in 2006. Thus, he became a dual Pakistani-British citizen (Aljibori 12).

Mohsin Hamid gained fame after the success of his major literary works *Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) followed by *Exit West* (2017). His writings were translated into many languages. They appeared on bestseller lists and they were adopted for cinematic production. Mohsin Hamid is accredited for revolutionizing contemporary Pakistani Literature. He is considered to be the speaker of the western- oriental cultural and social issues. As he takes on ethnic identity, class disparity, mass urbanization, politics, and refugee issues. His novels highly shed light on the state of minorities in the U.S. Thus, Cultural clash, racism, alienation hybridity, disillusionment, and identity crisis are the emerging themes in his novels (Sandhu).

Moth Smoke was Hamid's first novel published in 2000. The storytelling techniques used by Hamid in this narrative led him to win the PEN/Hemingway Award. The book was about a story of a drug addict man who was a former banker. This man fell in love with a friend's wife. The novel captures the anger and frustration of the working class in a completely corrupt society (Barua 1).

In 2007, Hamid published his second novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* which dealt with the 9/11 events and their effects on the lives of Pakistanis in America. It mainly provides the changing dynamics of Pakistani identity in the Western world and envelops an

interactive mistrust and skepticism between the Eastern and Western worlds. Hamid's narrative portrays the modern professional female character in contrast to women who are under the submissiveness of the patriarchal Pakistani males and society as a whole. This book soon became one of the New York Times bestsellers. It was selected for the Booker Prize and received other awards such as the Asian American Literature Award and the Anisfield Wolf Award (Aljibori 19).

His next publication was a worldwide literary work and it has been translated into 25 languages. The book is entitled *How to Get Filthy Rich in Asia* portrays the upheavals of capitalism on the sub-continent in general and on Pakistan in particular. It mirrors different social issues such as poverty, class difference, bureaucracy, nepotism, bribery, and corruption (Awan 485).

His next novel, *Exit West*, was published in 2017. The novel follows the story of a couple's departure from their war-torn home through a series of bizarre entrances that lead to the outside terrains. *Exit West* explores themes of unshakable fear and hopes for a near-future world. The novel was nominated for the prestigious Booker Prize in 2017 and won the debut Aspen Wards Literature Award in 2018 (Aljibori 16).

2.2. Hamid's Literary Influences

As with any other writer, Mohsin Hamid's writings are drawn upon his personal experiences as a Pakistani living in the West. His works often engage with the experiences of people living in the Global South and the impact of Western political and economic power on their lives. As a writer who straddles multiple cultures and perspectives, his works offer a unique insight into the complexities of our globalized world. However, most of his literary works are rooted in his experience of the 9/11th attacks as a Pakistani man in America.

According to Hamid, after the 9/11th attacks, discrimination was one of the major problems he faced. Suddenly, he became a subject of fear and suspicions, feeling that he has lost a partial whiteness (Anjum). Thus, he explores in all his writings the themes of belonging, identity, whiteness, racism, and displacement. To illustrate, in his novel *Moth Smoke*, Hamid draws upon his own experiences growing up in Lahore, Pakistan, to create a vivid portrait of the city and its inhabitants. Similarly, in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, he draws upon his experiences as a Princeton-educated Pakistani to explore the cultural and political divides between the East and the West (Crawford).

Besides, Hamid's literary works are shaped by his readings. He is known for his wide-ranging literary influences, which include both Western and Eastern traditions. One of the most significant influences on his writings is the tradition of magical realism. This literary style is characterized by the blending of the real and the magical, and it is often used to explore political and social issues. One of the writers who have influenced Hamid's work is Gabriel Garcia Marquez, a Colombian novelist and the founder of the literary style of magical realism. He has mentioned Marquez's novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as a significant influence on his writing. In an interview with *The Guardian*, Hamid said that “*One Hundred Years of Solitude* taught me that you could write about a place and people that were completely different from the ones I knew, and yet the writing could be very intimate” (Hughes). This influence is evident in Hamid's novel *Exit West*, which blends the real and the magical to explore the human cost of conflict and displacement.

The Second writer who influenced Hamid's work is Fyodor Dostoevsky, a Russian novelist known for his psychological depth and exploration of moral dilemmas. Hamid has mentioned Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* as a significant influence on his writing. In an interview with *The Telegraph*, Hamid said that “The existential torment of *Crime and*

Punishment was very powerful to me” (Armitstead). This influence is evident in Hamid's novel *Moth Smoke*, which explores the moral complexities of urban life in Pakistan and the tensions between the West and the Muslim world.

Additionally, Hamid cited several other authors as influences on his work, including Italo Calvino, Jorge Luis Borges, and Vladimir Nabokov. They are considered magical realist writers. Each of these writers is known for their innovative use of language, their exploration of the boundaries of reality and fantasy, and their ability to create rich, immersive worlds that challenge conventional ways of thinking (Wallace).

Hamid's work, such as *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *Exit West*, contains elements of magical realism, postmodernism, and fabulism that are reminiscent of the work of Borges, Calvino, and Vladimir Nabokov. For example, *Exit West* uses the device of magical doors to explore issues of migration, displacement, and identity, while *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* blends elements of satire and allegory to explore the complex relationship between the West and the Muslim world (Wallace).

The other significant influence on Hamid's writings is the Postcolonial literary tradition. Almost all his works deal with issues of identity, displacement, and power that are central to the postcolonial literary tradition. For instance, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* deals with issues of identity and belonging in a post-9/11 world, while *Exit West* explores the experience of displacement and the search for a new home in the face of war and conflict, and his last novel *The Last White Man* deals with the issue of race and whiteness as we shall show in the next chapter.

The first writer who influenced Hamid is Albert Camus, a French-Algerian philosopher, and writer. In an interview with *The New Yorker*, Hamid mentioned Camus's *The*

Stranger as a book that had a profound impact on him. Hamid said that “I was a teenager, and it was the first time I had read a book that didn't seem to have a moral center, a book that didn't seem to say whether things were right or wrong.” This influence can be seen in Hamid's novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, which explores the moral complexities of identity and belonging in a post-9/11 world (Hughes).

The second writer who influenced Hamid is J.M. Coetzee. Hamid has noted that Coetzee's writings; the exploration of power dynamics and politics, and colonialism have been an inspiration for his examination of similar themes of the complexities of power relations between individuals and communities. In an interview with *The New Yorker*, Hamid mentioned Coetzee's novel *Disgrace* as an influence on his work saying, “Disgrace is a great book about the aftermath of apartheid in South Africa, and I was interested in how a novel could be political without being didactic.” (*The New Yorker*). Salman Rushdie's work also has been another inspiration for Hamid's exploration of themes related to identity, diaspora, and migration. The influence of Rushdie's work can be seen in his novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* which explores similar themes of cultural dislocation and the search for identity (Collin).

The third writer is Franz Kafka who influenced Hamid. In some interviews, Hamid has mentioned Kafka's work as an inspiration for his exploration of themes related to alienation, isolation, and identity. Kafka's writing style, particularly his use of surreal and absurdist elements has also influenced Hamid's own writing style as he seeks to create a sense of disorientation and dislocation in his readers. He mentioned Kafka's novel *The Trial* as a significant influence on his writing. He said that, “Kafka is the master of the absurd, and *The Trial* helped me to understand the powerlessness of the individual in the face of bureaucracy” (Hughes). This influence can be seen in his novel *Moth Smoke* which explores the alienation

and despair of the protagonist in the face of social and economic pressures in contemporary Pakistan. Seemingly to Kafka's novel *Metamorphosis*, Hamid's *The Last White Man* also explores the workings of power, but with a focus on the ways in which it is entangled with whiteness and race.

The fourth writer is the Martinique Frantz Fanon. In an interview with *The Paris Review*, Hamid mentioned Fanon's book *The Wretched of the Earth* as a significant influence on his writing. He said that, "Fanon helped me to understand the politics of identity and the psychological effects of imperialism" (Chotiner). This influence is evident in his novel *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, which explores the economic and social inequalities of contemporary Pakistan and the tensions between tradition and modernity. Fanon's influence is highly noticed also in Hamid's last novel *The Last White Man* in which he explores the relationship between power and violence, which is another key theme in Fanon's work.

Hamid has built a connection to other Postcolonial writers such as James Baldwin, Edward Said, Chinua Achebe, Homi.K. Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak. They were significant impacts on Hamid's engagement with postcolonial literary tradition since their key themes are identity, representation, and power (*Aspen Institute*)

To sum up, Mohsin Hamid's literary influences are diverse and draw from a wide range of writers and thinkers. He encompasses postcolonial writers like Edward Said Chinua Achebe, Frantz Kafka, and Frantz Fanon, and magical realist writers like Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Jorge Luis Borges. These influences have helped shape his writing in a number of ways, from his experimentation with narrative structure and language to his exploration of themes like displacement, identity, and race. By drawing on these various literary traditions and styles, Hamid has developed a unique voice and perspective that continues to captivate readers and inspire new generations of writers.

2.3 The Summary of the Novel

Mohsin Hamid's new novel takes us to an unnamed American town where a young white man, Anders, wakes up one morning finding his white skin turned brown. This dramatic transformation that took place suddenly obliged Anders to confine himself scared of the external world recognizing him as being transformed dark-skinned. As a consequence, he texted his boss as being sick and he did not share what happened with anyone else, except Oona, his childhood love, and his girlfriend. Oona is a yoga teacher who lives an abandoned life, due to her family's tragedy and childhood. After that Oona was informed about the darkness of her boyfriend, she was not sure about her relationship's next step. She was so hesitant and frustrated mainly by her mother to discover the fact that her white girl is in a relationship with a dark-skinned man.

Throughout the scope of the story, the change was not restricted to Anders only but gradually covered almost all the white people in the city. This newfound transformation turned upside down the life of white citizens who turned dark. They became full of rage, violent and dangerous. Subsequently, the white militants went out taking control of the situation. The story of the novel went beyond race relationships, cultural hybridity, and violence to develop a love story between Anders and Oona. The novel closes with the couple's teenage daughter that was told by her grandmother about how their ancestors used to be white.

2.4 The Socio-Historical Background of the Novel

TLWM is Mohsin Hamid's last literary work in the quest of addressing contemporary issues regarding Orient's representation in Western societies. Mohsin Hamid in this novel resumed exploring racial differences and their impacts on the Middle-East minorities in the U.S. This insightful novel is set in America. It revolves around a couple's love story that

plots another trajectory on account of the ramification of a peculiar pandemic that transforms whites into browns.

Hamid in this revelatory novel explores the issue of whiteness that was structured in white superiority and privilege at the expense of brown exclusion and subjection. It is centered on portraying the major role of race in defining one's identity and status in American societies. Hence, Hamid depicts the brown-skinned people's experiences in the American community where non-white are oppressed and considered "less" than whites.

2.4.1 The 9/11 Attacks and Islamophobia

The 9/11 attacks in the U.S. and the dogma of Islamophobia that followed after were Hamid's core influence to write his novel. After these events, he started to be considered as a foreigner and a threat referring to his dark skin that reveals his Muslim identity. After the Oklahoma City bombing by a right-wing fanatic in 1995, the U.S. did not witness any scenes of violence until 2001. On the morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001, the U.S. came to a standstill and watched in terror the scenes of carnage put down in the name of Islam, the events that shaped a turning point in U.S. modern history. New government policies and atmosphere were generated in the U.S. in the question of the American Muslim minority after 9/11.

The 9/11 attacks were coordinated attacks. They were carried out by the Islamic extremist group Al-Qaeda, involving the hijacking of four commercial airplanes that targeted the World Centre in New York City, the Pentagon in Virginia, and the fields of Pennsylvania. The attacks also included direct threats and killing to maintain full control. These attacks were one of the deadliest attacks in the annals of intimidation that resulted in the deaths of approximately 3,000 people (Gupta 1). These attacks were carried out in a long path of figurative planning and preparation. The U.S. was targeted by Al-Qaeda in the early 1990s for

complex and multifaceted reasons among them, considering the U.S. as the first enemy that deprives them to establish a caliphate, U.S. foreign policy particularly its support for Israel, imperialism, and finally, the ideological and cultural clash between the West and East. This war on terror forced the U.S. government to act fast and set a number of measures to improve national security to prevent future attacks. Hence, many departments were established and several laws were legislated to strengthen homeland security, monitor and investigate suspected Muslim activists, and above all, increase public awareness of activist attacks under the campaign of “if you see it, say it” (qtd in. Kaczmarek et al 5).

The attacks unleashed an inconceivable torrent of pain and destruction not only on the Americans but also on the Muslim American minority, who shifted from visibility to hypervisibility (Majaj). The backlash chronicles the exclusion of Muslims in correspondence to U.S. defence policies. The Muslims became a subject of overt hostility from many different corners. Their status of stigmatization was brought afresh into focus, which was particularly occupied for two decades. Islam has long been misrepresented with suspicion in the U.S. Yet, nothing was issued until post 9/11 when a new overgeneralized and incorrect depiction of Muslims was added to their status. Anti-Muslim and Islamophobia sentiments surged to proclaim Muslims terrorists. This hostility was followed by discrimination and marginalization. Muslims started to encounter “hate, crimes, racial slurs, verbal harassment, and employment discrimination”(qtd. in Peek 5) Along with preventing them from religious practices, women wearing hijabs faced continuous assaults accompanying widespread vandalism at mosques. Additionally, referring to brown skin as one of the Muslims’ features, Muslims were alienated from political engagements and were considered a danger. Therefore, Hamid depicts the inferior position of brown-skinned people in the U.S.

2.4.2 Covid-19

The pandemic of Covid-19 inspired Hamid in writing his novel *TLWM* in terms of referring to the metamorphosis that turns white people into dark ones as a “pandemic.” Additionally, in the course of his novel, he described the conditions that resulted from this pandemic in seeking to portray the exact circumstances that people encountered during Covid-19. Thus, he included in his narrative the quarantine, the curfew, and the deliveries that were maintained basically to practise social distance.

As the world lurches forward to 2020, it viewed a pivotal incident that led to generating a metamorphosis in its global dynamism and psychology. The world crossed paths with a terrifying fatal disease that caused an estimated number of death of 4.5 million. Covid-19 or Coronavirus is an infectious disease induced by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. It was first identified in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and has since continued to spread worldwide. On March 11, 2020, Covid-19 was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (Brannen et al 1).

Due to inadequate remedies and limited options, preservative measures were employed to prevent the spread of this deadly virus. Wearing masks, frequent hands washing, sanitizing, practicing social distancing, and avoiding gatherings. Nevertheless, were not sufficient to interrupt the transmission. Hence, many countries asserted total lockdowns where all activities have been suspended. The rest of the globe’s countries afterward opted for the same track. This has weighty impacts on economics, societies, and individuals. The lockdowns have resulted in a temporary closure of many businesses which resulted in job loss and many people struggling to survive. They disrupted equally the education system which has a negative aftermath on students’ learning and well-being, especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Furthermore, reducing social interaction and its negative impacts

on mental health as the increasing scale of isolation caused anxiety, stress, and depression. Despite the negative impacts of this pandemic, still; it embraces some positive effects that it had on the environment and people's artistic and literary creativity.

3. Postcolonial Literature: A Background

From the 16th century to the present day, the world has experienced plural changes and upheavals, considering colonialism and its repercussions. European imperialism dominated almost every corner of the world often under the name of bringing the blessings of their modern civilization and freeing the subject people from their benighted ignorance. Moreover, the colonial discourse had negatively presented them as being "barbarian" and "non-civilized."

European colonialism went beyond the fake justified mission of civilizing ignorant people and bringing them to light. The European colonial powers were devastating. They did not only exploit and occupy the vast inhabited territories for economic, religious, and political purposes, but also implemented brutal policies and massive fluctuations in the natives' beliefs, and traditions. Their culture was radically cut off and replaced by the Western culture. Consequently, the indigenous people struggled with the newly integrated modern norms and all systems of beliefs and traditions.

4. Postcolonial Theory

Post-colonialism appeared firstly in the Mid-1980s in scholarly journals in Bill Ashcroft and Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin's book *The Empire Writes Back: Theory in Post-Colonial Literature* (1989). Yet this term is rooted in Edward Said's text in 1970. Post-colonial theory is one of the major theoretical approaches used in literary studies and criticism. It studies the power relationship between both the colonizer and the colonized and

its impacts. For Ashcroft et al “Post-colonial refers to the various cultural effects of colonization” (168). It examines the continuing effects of European colonialism. According to Loomba, the effects of colonialism on countries that were previously colonized still exist to the present day. She states, “inequities of colonial rule have not been erased” (7). Moreover, it inspects indigenous people’s reactions and resistance to the change.

4.1 Bhabha’s Postcolonial Concepts

Homi K Bhabha is an Indian English postcolonial theorist. He was born in Mumbai in 1949. Bhabha is a member of the Indian minority; a community of refugees descended from Iraq. Although his experience as he lives between cultures, he rarely refers to his background. His book *Nation and Narration* (1990) explores the significance of these Enlightenment-era notions of nation, nationalism, and nationality. In his second book, *The Location of Culture* (1994), he investigates the complex cultural and political distinctions that separate gender, race, class, and sexuality (Far and Haydon 9).

Among the key concepts of postcolonial theory stated by Homi K. Bhabha in his book *The Location of Culture* are Otherness, Cultural Difference, Ambivalence, and Mimicry. They are explained below as we judge that they are pertinent to our study, which intends to analyze the issue of whiteness and its impacts on white and dark-skinned people in the U.S. by referring to Hamid’s *TLWM*.

4.1.1 Otherness

In his essay, “The Other Question: The Stereotypes and Colonial Discourse”, Bhabha defines the concept of otherness as “a theoretical construct that enables us to explore the political and social relations between self and other, the familiar and the unfamiliar, the insider and outsider” (1). According to Bhabha’s theory of otherness, cultural identities are

neither set nor predestined but rather created via encounters and compromises between various cultural groups. Otherness is establishing the dividing lines between several cultural groups and allows the formation of cultural identity. Moreover, Bhabha explains how the colonial subject is taken as other, leading to the formation of stereotypes in colonial discourse.

4.1.2 Cultural Difference

Cultural Difference is a focal concept in the work of Homi K. Bhabha as it forms a foundational element of his theoretical framework. In his book *The Location of Culture* (1994), where Bhabha elaborates on his concept of Cultural Difference, he argues that it is pivotal to understanding the complexities of colonial and postcolonial societies and the dynamics of identity formation in those contexts. Bhabha, within the same book, defined Cultural Difference as “it is not an absolute, essential or fixed identity, but a social and historical construct, which is produced through the articulation of power and knowledge” (2).

Bhabha deposits that Cultural Difference comes into question when two (or more) cultures come across and interact. It is manifested in the frameworks of colonialism, post-colonialism, and globalization. The cultural differences that are aligned in race, class, gender, and nationality induce a milieu where the position of cultures is determined. Hence, it brings forth a superior, inferior, and center, periphery culture, where dominant groups exert power and control through the production of knowledge, representation, and discourse over marginalized groups who resist and negotiate their identities within these power dynamics. Accordingly, Bhabha’s main ideas of the concept of Cultural Difference argue that it is not fixed or predetermined, but is produced through constant negotiation and contestation of meaning, values, and practices.

Furthermore, Bhabha closely ties this concept to the so-called “third space of enunciation.” It is a space of possibilities “where other and self are both represented, neither

one nor the other, but something in-between.” (207). He scrutinizes that the negotiation of cultural differences between the colonizer and colonized produces a new form of cultural identity. Hybrid identity combines two different cultures in an innovative act of cultural conversion. (Bahadur 172). In this context, Lazarus elucidates that Bhabha’s third space “is a fighting term, a theoretical weapon, which intervenes in the existing debates and resists certain political and philosophical construction” by interrogating the validity of cultural identity (4). Bhabha conceptualizes the third space in the political discourse of hybridity and ambivalence.

4.1.3 Ambivalence

Ambivalence is another key concept in Homi K. Bhabha’s thinking. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha spotlights the fact that culture is not monodirectional where only one group affects the other. Culture is rather “a circle where every participant has the potential to affect others” (Sadari 3). In this regard, ambivalence is a new term that Bhabha adopts into the colonial discourse. He argues that ambivalence is a fundamental aspect of the colonial experience. He deposits that colonialism creates a hybrid space of cultural encounter where the colonized and the colonizer came into contact with each other in the way they are often marked by ambivalence.

According to Bhabha, the ambivalent relationship between the colonized and the colonizer exposes the inherent contradictions of the colonial discourse in a way it is derided and also desired. Hence, the relationship between them is a complex mix of attraction and repulsion, where the colonized subject is never completely opposed to the colonizer. Some are “complicit” and others are “resisted”. Likewise, the colonizer relates to the colonized subject for it may be explorative or nurturing (102-122).

Bhabha moreover, explains that these dual perceptions and dimensions that characterize the ambivalent relationship between the colonized and the colonizer does not belong to the binary opposition of Self and Other that Edward Said's *Orientalism* explains. Instead, ambivalence sets cultures and identities in a third location, an in-between space where differences are welcomed to give rise to a new relation that links the two opposed elements. Subsequently, ambivalence disrupts the clear-cut authority and domination of the colonial discourse as it disrupts the dominant and submissive, central and periphery standard link between the colonized and the colonizer.

4.1.4 Mimicry

For Bhabha mimicry describes the ambivalent relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. This process releases the desire of the dominant colonial rule to make the colonized people like the colonizer. In fact, this affects both the colonizer and the colonized; since the colonized mimics the colonizer in terms of ideology, values, and attitude, the dividing line between these two starts to blur. The authority of the colonizer over the colonized is under threat since mimicry is providing the colonizer with power for resistance. As a result, the colonial power over the colonized will eventually disappear.

Even though the colonized loses some traits of his identity as he mimics the colonizer's language, dress, and food, he gains resistance and assimilation into the colonizer's culture. The colonizer becomes disturbed by this ambiguous position as he realizes that the paradigm has shifted and he is no longer considered to be the dominant one.

These four concepts are used as tools to study Hamid's work of fiction *TLWM*, to explore the dilemma of whiteness and its impacts on white and dark-skinned people living in the U.S. that shall be seen in the coming chapter.

Conclusion

Throughout this introductory chapter, we have explored the PEL as a newly spotlighted area of study that tackles various themes linked to the issues of race notably in the wake of Orientalism, and the wave of islamophobia that took shape after the dogma of the 9/11th. In doing so, we have introduced Mohsin Hamid as one of the contemporary Pakistani English writers who reported among these racial issues, the dilemma of whiteness in the U.S. We have referred to his biography, bibliography, and his literary influences to draw a familiarization with the author. Then, we introduced his novel *TLWM* by offering its summary to provide a glimpse into the story along with its socio-historical background that served in shaping the novel. Furthermore, we have briefly reviewed the postcolonial literature, and postcolonial theory referring to Bhabha's main postcolonial concepts of Otherness, Cultural Difference, Ambivalence, and Mimicry.

The next chapter serves as an analytical part. It aims to study Hamid's novel *TLWM*. It analyzes the dilemma of whiteness and its impacts on white and dark-skinned people in the U.S. using Bhabha's above-mentioned concepts.

Chapter Two

The Issue of Whiteness in *The Last White Man*

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Introduction

This second chapter is an analysis of the novel's characters, by applying postcolonial approach which was introduced in the previous chapter. It is guided by the scholar and theorist Homi K. Bhabha's concepts of Otherness, Cultural Difference, Ambivalence, and Mimicry which we shall use in our analysis throughout this chapter.

Race and whiteness in America have a complex and controversial history. The concept of race is a social construct that has been employed to classify people according to their physical characteristics forming racial hierarchies that justifies slavery, segregation, and discrimination. Whiteness has been elevated as a formative standard against which all other racial and ethnic groups are measured. It articulates these groups in respect of inclusion and exclusion. In the modern era, whiteness remains deeply engrained in American communities. White skin is still associated with power, privilege, and social status, and systematic stereotypes continue to impact people of color. In his novel, Mohsin Hamid represents this issue. He portrays his characters' self/other responses to the dilemma of losing their whiteness.

1. Otherness in *The Last White Man*

Otherness is discussed by Bhabha in his book *The Location of Culture*. According to him, otherness possesses certain blurriness. Thus, he connects it with an overstated and inflated system of representations. For Bhabha, this notion appeared throughout the representation of the white colonizer who embraces certain positive attributes. This has taken an oppositional direction toward the colonizer's subject. Therefore, it creates an opposition

between the in-group and the out-group which is directly considered to be different. Basically, it is taken as other. While attributing the white with positive characteristics, a completely contradictory image has emerged concerning the out-group or the other. According to Bhabha's explanation, the contrast of characteristics and attributions creates what is called binarism, between the Civilized/Uncivilized, the Self/the Other, Us/Them, and White/Black. As a result, polarity exists to allow the white to build their own identity of superiority over non-white or dark-skinned people as a reflection of them through the use of exaggerated representation and prejudice. Hence, the other is defined most importantly as inferior and second class-citizen.

Bhabha states that "The critique of whiteness [...] attempts to displace the normativity of the white position by seeing it as a strategy of authority rather than an authentic or essential identity" (Bhabha 21). For him, whiteness is a racial construct that tends to classify identities and cultures in terms of superiority and inferiority. Consequently, people of color are considered to be the out-group. Thus, they are excluded by the norms.

In his novel, Hamid examines the factor of skin color and its repercussions on individuals' representations and identifications, using skin color as the signifier that determines the resolution of individuals' authority, privilege, and position in American society. Throughout the protagonist Anders, *TLWM* mirrors the issue of loss of someone's whiteness and authority in a community where whiteness offered its people favoritism, advantages, and privilege at the expense of the people of color who are regarded as inferior and other.

In *The Location of Culture*, in his essay "The Other Question", Bhabha states that otherness is produced in its different forms. It is "seen in racist stereotypes, statements, jokes, myths" (91). This quote demonstrates that the authority of the colonizer practices otherness

through different approaches. He adds that stereotyping is a manner of perceiving and objectifying alien individuals and societies. It is presented as a mode of representing and judging other persons in unchanging, fixed terms of inferiority and lack as he states in his *The Location of Culture* “Its image as identity, is always threatened by lack” (77). It is notified that stereotyping is a process by which individuals or groups are given identities and social status, values, and so on through certain specific signifiers such as race, history, class, and ethnicity. So, the colonial object is given a meaning and a position.

In Bhabha’s opinion, stereotypes are pernicious manifestations of otherness since they can be exceedingly challenging to be deleted, they are particularly resistant to change since they are deeply rooted in the dominant culture. As a matter of fact, these preconceptions are extremely effective in affecting how individuals view others since these perceptions are supported by literature, media, and other types of cultural creations. Moreover, it is stated that there are two types of stereotypes. The stereotypical of the self, and the stereotypical of the other; that applies to the novel under study.

In *TLWM*, Anders was stereotyped by himself in what Bhabha calls the stereotypical self in respect of inferiority, periphery, and ugliness to the extent he wanted to kill himself. This mode of stereotyping is allocated within the character of Anders as he perceived himself as occupying a subordinate position in his American society, considering himself inferior, less valuable, and situated in a lowered status.

Hamid depicts white people who experience a sudden transformation of being dark-skinned because of the wild spread of a peculiar pandemic that turns white people into dark ones. The protagonist Anders is a young white man who wakes up one morning to find out that he turned dark. More precisely, Anders witnessed a sudden racial transformation. As a response, he developed a certain feeling of fear, sadness, and rage at the same time towards

himself as he gained a completely new different shape, contrasting from what Anders was before. Anders believes that he had lost everything he owned; himself, his attachment to the old Anders, his old centrality, and most importantly, his sense of superiority as a white man. As Hamid puts it, “He [Anders] realized that he had been robbed, that he was the victim of a crime, the horror of which only grew, a crime that had taken everything from him, that had taken him from him” (*TLWM* 2).

The difference between the old Anders and the new one is paramount. For this, Anders disgusted himself at a certain point that drives him to desire to end the life of the dark man who confronted him everywhere. Anders grows a feeling of being no more like the Anders he was before, a different kind of person, who does not belong anywhere. Now the protagonist’s dark appearance prescribes his otherness.

After Anders’s metamorphosis, he becomes stereotyped by others in what Bhabha calls stereotypical of the other. When other white people started turning into dark ones as they appeared on social media, in the town, and even at the gym where Anders is working. For such Anders develops a feeling of relief, since now he is not the only person who witnessed this transformation. However, things become worse. In this regard, Hamid states “Anders had thought this would make things better, but it seemed the opposite was happening.” (*TLWM* 35). The feeling of relief turned into a blended feeling of exclusion from his whiteness, to inclusion to a minority of “otherized” foreigners, as these colored people were reported to be total strangers, aliens. These people were represented by their difference from the rest. They are simply prescribed as other. Conscious that these attributions are used to describe the rest of the world, everything that does not fall in the purview of whiteness; as anything that is not part of the white concept is considered as inferior, a menace, and less valuable.

Regardless of how Anders would appear in his sphere of contact, his social circle was the first to consider him as a different kind of person. Oona, Ander's girlfriend, after learning about her boyfriend's transformation into a dark person, she went hesitant to reconsider again her relationship with him. Oona met her newly dark-skinned boyfriend. She confronted him with the harsh reality telling him, "that he looked like another person, not just another person, but a different kind of person, utterly different" (*TLWM* 8). She makes it clear that "anyone who saw him would think the same" (*TLWM* 8). Thus, Oona's frankness sharpened Anders feeling towards himself making it direct that he is not the same person anymore. Comparable to the way his father regarded him as being different, Ander's father "did not like to look at Anders, at what his son had become" (*TLWM* 32).

Oona's mother was the main character who mostly perceived Anders as the other. For her, the transformed people are just strangers who do not belong to their pure race. Oona's mother reflects white people's perceptions of dark-skinned individuals. She attributes cruelty and hatred to these underrepresented people. According to her beliefs, she is thinking that these violent people are "Saboteurs [who try to] kill both our defenders and our people in general" (*TLWM* 43).

In the American society where Anders resides, people rejects the fact that the white people are turning into dark ones. According to their white cultural beliefs they previously absorbed from their ancestor's clichés about dark persons representing violence, menace, brutality, and abuse. It is revealed that whiteness has always been an authority-building system. For Oona's mother, it appears that whiteness has a coherence, stability, and finality that supports its superiority and sense of authority. In this context Hamid notes, "It was not that we were better than them, although we were better than them, how could you deny it" (*TLWM* 43). This old woman strongly believes that the white race is undeniably better and

prior to the dark race, as their race is pure, stable, and safe and nobody could deny this fact as a reality.

Oona's mother directed hatred and ugliness at every person who turned dark and was disgusted by the fact that these persons published their pictures after their metamorphosis on their social media accounts. When Oona suddenly turned dark, her mother was feeling great sorrow she could not believe that this nightmare happen to her little daughter, in this regard, the narrator states, "Oona's mother knew this must be difficult for Oona, so difficult for her poor, once-beautiful daughter, to be like that now, look like that now." (*TLWM* 64) Oona's mother believes that her girl would never be beautiful again as her beauty existed only with the existence of her whiteness. Once she lost her whiteness, she lost her beauty as well.

When Oona's mother perceived her daughter in an intimate position with the dark Anders. He recognized her but she did not. She immediately runs, as if she is scared by something but instead, she is disgusted. As the narrator states,

Anders recognized her but she did not recognize Anders, and for a second Anders thought she was going to scream, but she did not scream, instead, she ran, or if not ran, she heaved, she heaved herself out of the doorway, and down to the hall towards the bathroom and before she could make it her guts heaved too and she could not control them, she doubled over and vomited on the carpet, heaving and heaving with her eyes wet and her nose wet until her stomach was empty. (*TLWM* 59).

The frustrated Oona was voiceless the next morning knowing that her mother's rejection of the dark people in society is great but not greater than her rejection of her daughter's intimate relationship with a dark-skinned man. This event made things even more difficult for Anders because this old woman's reaction confirms the way white people identify

him as an alien and inferior. For such Anders considers himself to be a second-class citizen, and stereotyped based on his membership in this group of recently transformed persons.

Only Oona's mother is impatiently waiting for the situation to be reversed. She harbors some optimism that everything would turn back to normal. Her final transformation into a dark person came as a shock to her, she closed herself home, voiceless saying nothing but scrolling through profiles of people who had posted their pictures after they became dark. She was proud to be among the last person in the city to become a dark individual as Hamid notes, "There was a dread in it for her, and also pride, a sense that she had done her best and held on longer than most" (*TLWM* 69).

As Bhabha notifies that the colonizer creates stereotypes about the stupidity and ignorance of the colonial subject, racist jokes, cinematic images, and myths. So, if we transpose this binary to white and black, the white people in the novel take the role of the colonizer.

Ander's exclusion increases more and more, every time he came into contact with the whites. When Anders and his girlfriend met on an off day, there were boys who started staring at this lady dating a colored man. Anders comes to find that he is the only dark person surrounded by all white as "the boys all in similar color, more or less, and Anders was dark and Oona was light" (*TLWM* 27). Therefore, the boy's stares intensified Ander's otherness and ugliness as being the only observed dark person.

Oona's mother believes in some terrible mystical truth. For her, the only reason for the spread of violence and chaos in the country is because the transformed people are paid to do so. She thinks that they were sent to kill white people and eradicate their race. She thinks that the dark and white races must be separated from each other because they cannot coexist together. Oona's mother believes that dark people represent a danger, an eradicating menace

to the white race. She believes that people have to react and do something to prevent this nightmare to happen. As the narrator mentions,

The dark people could have their own places, and there they could do their own dark things, or whatever, and we would not stop them [...] now there was no time to wait, now they were converting us, and lowering us, and that was a sign, a sign that if we did not act in this moment there would be no more moments left and we would be gone (*TLWM* 43).

As Oona's mother's readings on the savagery of dark people did not stop, she starts developing fear, afraid of what she read, scared that the dark people would manifest themselves again and again throughout history. This old woman's sense of intuition is telling her that the extermination of their race is closely coming and there is no escape from this horrifying transformation. Moreover, this woman is of a strong belief that people of the white race are under a horrible menace and dreadful reality, which means their whiteness is going to be taken from them, sooner or later, at all costs. Hamid mentions.

The final chaos was approaching, it was said, a descent into crime and anarchy, and cannibalism, cannibalism out of hunger, and worse, out of vengeance, and blood would flow, and all should prepare for the end, gather with the like-minded or barricade themselves in their homes, ready for the last stand, the last stand before we were overrun, because we were no safer for being dark, they could tell the difference, they still knew who we were, what we were, and they would come for us now, now that we were blind, and could not see one another, could not see which of us was actually us, and they would come for us like predators in the night, taking their prey when their prey was defenseless (*TLWM* 75).

Hamid describes white ways of perception and prejudice about dark people throughout the character of Oona's mother. She identifies them as savages, killers, dangerous, and brutal individuals. Hamid argues that these accusations are firmly ingrained in white culture and society.

Bhabha highlights that media has the power to produce and disseminate a range of discourses on race. Throughout the story's plot development, reports started to emerge, on television and on different social media platforms about white people started turning dark around the country. The city's atmosphere changed as soon as the news began to seriously circulate after being previously mocked at. As Bhabha describes it, "for the streets were not safe, not even their part of town" (*TLWM* 49). Even stores and roads were deserted. As a response, people started displaying a sense of menace, fear, and hostility. The city experienced an upsurge in violence, disputes, and crimes, "There were flare-ups of violence in the town, a brawl here, a shooting there" (*TLWM* 30). The media contributed to accord certain delusional concepts of threat and menace to the white people who turned dark that they are a real menace and root of the town's instability. This required the militants to keep out all the transformed individuals.

One image that evokes the influence of social media is when the horror was displayed in the town because of the transformed people who were presented as a threat to the white lives, deliveries continued and people could get whatever they order since roads and stores are deserted as everyone is confined and stayed home for safety. Oona and her mother too, "avoided going out, unless it was absolutely necessary" (*TLWM* 49). However, the delivery services were affordable for only white people. In this regard Hamid states, "the delivery guys operating in pairs, one in the car, watchful, the other outside ringing the bell, armed, a pistol

on his hip, cap wedged low, pale hair peeking out beyond it, Oona called out to him from her upstairs window and let him see the color of her face” (*TLWM* 49).

The highly advised procedures had been followed in order to ensure the delivery’s success and both sides of the transaction’s safety. This contributed strongly to worsen the condition of the dark-skinned people in the society. Specifically, Anders who felt vaguely menaced, he goes around the town wearing, “a hoodie, his face invisible from the sides.” (*TLWM* 12).

According to Bhabha, eradicating otherness necessitates an unlearning process in which people and societies question and re-evaluate their preconceived notions about other cultures and try to create a more nuanced and comprehensive knowledge of cultural differences. Although the process of unlearning might be demanding and difficult, it is crucial for advancing intercultural understanding and creating cultural variety. As Bhabha states, “To overcome stereotypes, we need to rethink our assumption about cultural difference and develop more nuanced and complex understandings of identity that recognize the hybrid and contested nature of cultural formation” (101).

Hamid in his tale applies this process of unlearning, where his characters altered their conceptions about racial dynamics. The unnamed American town co-existed with the metamorphosis and accepted and embraced their dark selves. They learned the fact that black or white is not a setting for articulation that defines one’s status in society. The characters left racism and its cultural impact behind as they realized the harm caused by associating biology with ideology and skin color with culture.

2. Cultural Difference in *TLWM*

Bhabha explains that the difference in cultures takes another verge in its genealogy when this difference is questioned. This rises from the interaction of different cultures in a

molded setting. The opposition in traditions, customs, races, religion, and social norms generates a power system where cultural hierarchy comes forth to identify the position of cultures in terms of superiority and inferiority. Bhabha in this approach, refers to cultural difference as an unfixed or unessential quality, but rather a dynamic and performative process of the “enunciation of culture” which he defines in his essay, “Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences” as “knowledgeable, authoritative, adequate to the construction of systems of cultural identification” (Bhabha 268).

According to Bhabha, cultural difference is manifested in multicultural societies. He considers multiculturalism as the fecund ground which opens the sketch for opposing cultures to meet. Thus, differences are negotiated and interrogated which further leads to generating new understandings of cultural positions of the center and periphery. Accordingly, cultural prejudices issues that are articulated in multicultural societies are simply justified. In this vein, Bhabha states, “In Multicultural societies, cultural differences can be a source of tension and conflict” (Bhabha 11).

Hamid sets his story in America, a country that is known for its cultural diversity. It becomes to be called a melting pot on account of its long history of immigration and abundant journeys that were made since the 17th century. It is a spot where many cultures were blended transforming America into a multicultural country. However, this produced a complexity in its ethnic mechanism where these cultures oppose each other resulting in a conglomeration of binary oppositions where people are categorized according to their culture. According to these considerations, cultural differences, hence, are seen as a structure of power and injustice that defines people’s identity and status in society.

Mohsin Hamid in his *TLWM* explored the issue of skin color and its role in identifying one’s identity in the American community. Bhabha argues that skin color is a significant

aspect of cultural difference, particularly in societies that are stratified along racial or ethnic lines. In his book, *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha argues that skin color is not simply a biological fact but “it is one of the discursive mechanisms by which meaning is produced and power is articulated.”(87), which determines one’s status and cultural identity, shaping how individuals are perceived and treated by others in society.

TLWM captures the issue of whiteness at the expense of dark-skinned people living in America through the story of Anders, an American white man who wakes up one morning to find he had turned a deep and undeniable brown in a community where “the category of white has a special force. (qtd. in Ashcroft et al 272) and it is regarded as superior over the dark-skinned category which is perceived as simply less important and inferior.

Bhabha highlights that “the problem of cultural difference is not that various cultures exist in the world; it is that difference becomes a site of contestation, abuse, insult, and discrimination” (qtd in Gary, A et al 362). He views in his book *Nation and Narration* and in his essay *DissemiNation* that the privileged white race was socially and culturally constructed through power dynamics of imperialism and colonialism where whiteness is “employed as a social discriminator” (qtd. in Ashcroft et al 272). Ander’s transformation provoked in his inner self a state of trauma with blended feelings of disbelief, sorrow, and above all despise. When Anders confronted his reflection in the mirror door askew, he was swept away by emotions. Emotions of “unexpected, murderous rage. He [Anders] wanted to kill the colored man who confronted him here in his home” (*TLWM* 2).

After confirming his transformation into a dark person through the algorithm of his digital album that failed to identify him, he realized he is trapped by this hostile company. Later, a sense of curiosity haunted his spirit to investigate his new dark physical appearance as stated in what follows:

[T]he texture of the hair on his scalp, the subtle on his face, the grain of the skin on his hands, dry, the reduced visibility of the blood vessels there, the color of his toenails, the muscles of his calves, and, stripping, fanatic, his penis, unremarkable in size and heft. (*TLWM* 3).

Anders found himself peculiar. He felt bizarre to an extent where self-acceptance seemed infeasible and beyond contention. He sees himself as a “sea creature that should not exist” (*TLWM* 3). Anders believed that dark skin symbolizes ugliness, oppression, and denial. He innately holds disgust towards dark-skinned people whom he views as “animals, not humans, being transported from one task, one site, to the next” (*TLWM* 12). As much as he despised himself as dark, he refused to leave his house and kept faking sickness to his boss. Anders feared to be viewed in disgust, peripheral as he views other dark- people and mainly the dark cleaning guy in the gym whom he [Anders] “was just treating like a puppy, a dog, that you give a couple of pats to, and call out good boy” (*TLWM* 27). In contrast, he believed that his whiteness seizes him with privilege, entitlement, and pride.

Correspondingly, when Anders was forced to leave his house to get some food, the representations he has of the dark-skinned people, engendered illusions in his mind. A mirage of him being deemed as an Other and consistently ill-treated. In the supermarket, Anders saw “flickers of hostility and distaste” (*TLWM* 4) from the white people he encountered. And when a white woman shouted and cursed him on the road while driving, he was certain that she would not show this discourtesy if she knew he was white. Similarly, when he returned to the gym after the widespread of this pandemic that transforms whites into dark, Anders felt people are no more sending him glares of admiration. He even feared adding disappointment to his father if he knows about his transformation into a dark-skinned guy. However, these thoughts were only in his imagination in response to his background beliefs and paranoia.

In the *Location of Culture*, Bhabha states that “cultural difference is a space of enunciation where the meaning and limits of social identity are contested. (10). He argues that cultural identity is not pre-determined or fixed but constructed through an ongoing process of negotiation and contestation. He emphasizes that when two cultures come across and interact, cultural identity is argued.

Being a complex combination of two opposing cultures and identities directed Anders to a liminal space, which Bhabha defines as “the slippage of signification that is celebrated in the articulation of difference” (235). This slippage makes it impractical for cultural identity’s identification to move freely between the two opposed systems. Thus, the truth of identity and culture must be always called into question (Fetson 24). After his transformation, Anders felt he has been robbed; he was a victim of a crime, “that has taken him from him” (*TLWM 2*). The loss of his whiteness signified a withdrawal from his identity, “for how he could say he was Anders now” (*TLWM 2*) Therefore, He could not identify his self-concept. He was caught between his lost white superior identity and the inferior one he obtained due to his transformation. Anders was in a state where he slipped his self-classification, in a moment when “the past has lost its grip and the future has not taken yet its definite shape” (Tuner 133). For there, he lived in what Bhabha called, “a sense of disorientation and disturbance” (qtd. in Fetson 25) that restrain him to label his identity. Moreover, this state kept him in a limbo of unbelonging.

According to Bhabha, cultural difference is a “particular constructed discourse” (qtd. in Gary et al 362) that has been fed by historical processes of power distribution. For him, cultural difference resulted from the diversity of cultures that categorizes the human race. However, it is problematic when it becomes linked with “the redistribution of goods between cultures, or the findings of cultures, or the emergence of minorities” (Gary et al 362). A

distribution that identifies which of the cultures are main and privileged and which are minor and excluded.

Anders' view of dark-skinned people was not an innate, innovative conception but rather a complex perception that he inherited from his society. Anders' disgust and denial of his newly obtained identity was a product of his culture's identification and representation of the dark race and culture as a minority and a periphery among their special and superior white ones. People's view on the changed Anders perfected his feelings of refusal and unbelonging. Hence, the state of uncertainty in Anders's identity classification was an output of intra-antra stimulation.

The American community where Anders lives resists the idea of people turning into dark. As soon as the news spread in the media, the mood in the city alters and people display hostility and a sense of reluctance and fear. Stores were bare and roads were abandoned. Bhabha pinpoints that, "all recognize that the problem of the cultural emerges only at the signifying boundaries of cultures, where means and values are (mis) read or signs are misappropriated" (206). People believed the pandemic is a "plot against their kind" (*TLWM* 24). Therefore, the more the number of the changing people increased the more violence, grudge, and brawl flared up in the city. This called for pale-skinned militants to exclude the transformed people whom they viewed as a source of threat and the core reason for the town's instability. The militants were merciless and practiced violence toward any dark-skinned person they encounter. However, this violence was justified. By the voice of Anders's girlfriend's mother who says:

If there was violence it was because there were paid aggressors on the other side, saboteurs, and they were trying to kill both our defenders and our people in general,

and they were sometimes killing their own kind, to make us look bad, and also because some of their own kind supported us. (*TLWM* 43).

In American societies dark represents violence, immorality, abuse, and brutality. That is, this old woman believed in separation because of their opposed natures. Their white race is superior and cannot coexist with the inferior, savage dark one. She was certain this would solve the problem and regain the peace and prosperity of their community. The dark people on the other hand, “could have their own places, and there they could do their own dark things” (*TLWM* 43). She assumed they are “converting” and “lowering” (*TLWM* 43) their kind and they are going to be the reason behind its eradication. In the same vein, when a transformed white man shot himself in front of his own house he thought of the dark body lying there an intruder, shot with his own gun after a struggle with the homeowner.

Regardless of how Anders would be perceived publically, his social sphere was the starter of his identity’s misconception. When his girlfriend Oona was informed of his transformation she could not but be “unnerved by his appearance” (*TLWM* 8) regarding him as a “different kind of person” (*TLWM* 8) not only in the way his body structure looked but even his expressions seemed uncommon in part she sensed betrayal toward the old white Anders after her intimate night with the actual dark Anders. Oona inevitably ignored Ander’s calls and messages. She thought of him as a stranger whose company transmits her vibes of insecurity (*TLWM* 9).

This is also felt by his father who stared at him as a “man who had been Anders” (*TLWM* 14). When the father watched Anders approach, he accepted his son was gone and this new guy is going to suffer. Anders’ father could not look at his son as much as he loathe what he sees especially the image of his “brown skin against his pale skin” (*TLWM* 32). Even

his boss at the gym scornfully stated, “I would kill myself if it was me” (*TLWM* 17) to convey how different Anders had become.

Under these conditions, Anders was highly observed which induced within him a sense of paranoia and menace. Due to their conception of him as a different person, Anders was worried by the presence of his white contacts. In this course of things, Anders wished for an undo, hoping “to return to his old centrality or at least to a role better than this peripheral one” (*TLWM* 24). Publicly, Anders felt vaguely menaced. Thus, he covers up each time he goes around the town or visits his father. He was unsure about how to react as he was afraid of how any action of him would be perceived. He even prevents “his gaze to linger in ways it could be misconstrued” (*TLWM* 12). When the militants came to drive him out of the city, he could perceive how “self-righteous they were, how certain that he, Anders, was in the wrong, that he was the bandit here” (*TLWM* 45) trying to rob their whiteness. Anders being considered an Other in his white culture triggered in him a desire to search for recognition from the dark ones. The dark cleaning guy in the gym was the only dark person Anders know. But when Anders showed interest in him, he received disregard and neglect.

The replacement of Ander’s status in society situated him between two cultural systems. The way he was treated with admiration, centrality, and above all safety was extracted and substituted by disgust and threat (*TLWM* 31). Therefore, ambiguity towards his identity has been approved and perfected shaping a state of ambivalence. Bhabha in his *Location of Culture* deposits that ambivalence arises when two or more cultural contexts come into contact. It is characterized by incompleteness and instability. Anders’ identity was unstable. He was neither white nor dark. Among the whites, he thought of himself as “a bird perched next to lions” (*TLWM* 35). Alternatively, being around dark people for him, was like a foreign language “It had been hard enough for him to read and write in their language”

(*TLWM* 26). Bhabha additionally regards ambivalence as a space of uncertainty and ambiguity where the boundaries between cultures are constantly being negotiated and contested. The way people perceived Anders as distinct and a threat re-identified his identity. In this terrain, Anders says, “The way people act around you, it changes what you are, who you are” (*TLWM* 26). Anders’ identity, hence, became a loaded question that was generated because of the misconception of his character that was constructed by him and his surroundings.

Bhabha highlights that the state of un-belonging and uncertainty of one’s identity that lies in the spaces of liminality and ambivalence discloses a new cultural form, “hybridity”. According to Bhabha, Hybridity is a cultural mixture that emerges from “the ongoing interactions of different cultures and traditions” (7). It is that “active moment of challenge and resistance” (Ashcroft et al 138) against categorization and classification. Bhabha further highlights that hybridity gives rise to “new identities and cultural forms” (2).

Being a combination of two cultures, Anders was displayed as a milieu that offers a prospect for these opposed cultures to interact and negotiate. He questioned the binary opposition between the contradicted parts of his dark and white personalities by re-examining the structure of power and concluding that there is no absolute control of one over the other within him. Therefore, Anders moved from the stage of ambiguity to transparency and from questioning his identity to accepting its duality. In accordance, his identity became a melange, hotch-potch, a bit of this and a bit of that which signifies a new form of identity that Bhabha calls a “hybrid identity” (38) where cultural differences are accepted.

This hybrid identity manifests in an in-between space, which Bhabha denominates the “third space”. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha clarifies that “the transformational, or translation, of elements that are neither the One [...] nor the Other [...] but something else

besides, which contest the terms and the territories of both” (28). Hence, the new identity that emerges “the hybrid identity” does not include a double identification. But rather, it carries its own practices, norms, and symbols. Bhabha describes this state of identity as “being in the beyond.” (10). Jeffress in his book, *Postcolonial Resistance: Culture, Liberation, and Transformation* sees this space as a form of resistance, which subverts the colonial narratives of identity dichotomies and binaries. (29).

When we look at Anders as a representation of this space, his hybrid identity was the fertile ground where the opposed cultures co-existed. Within the context of the story, each of the cultures was given a representation, white culture was privileged whereas the dark was excluded. Anders transcended the cultural boundaries between the two cultures. He started to view his identity outside of the rigid assumptions of each culture. He entered this third space where he was engaged to understand the difference and connect these opposing cultures in a symbiotic relationship.

Anders begins to enter the third space by appropriating dark culture. This was set forth when he suddenly grew concerned about other dark people typically the dark cleaning guy. That he used to ignore. This juxtaposes an image of him starting to perceive darks as humans with valuable lives and feelings. Afterward, he interestingly held a desire to explore the dark culture that forms the other component of his identity. So, he sought assistance from the dark cleaning guy who “could probably tell Anders a few things, and Anders could probably stand to learn” (*TLWM* 27). His willingness to understand the dark culture signifies his willingness to allow the boundaries between the cultures to break where compatibility between them emerges. The interconnectedness of these cultures eventually gave Anders a foothold where he was able to speak of his identity not in terms of articulation but rather acceptance. He accepted this unique blend of his identity where he denounces classification. Hence, Anders

kept his old white culture in his third space and embraced his present dark one. There, it was “the desire to continue to be Anders” (*TLWM* 42) away from cultural boundaries and representations.

Through his main character Anders, Hamid wants both to subvert and uphold colonial racial ideology. He wants to break down the cultural difference and the binary opposition of white and dark. He wishes us readers to step into the blurred space with Anders to bridge the gap between cultural boundaries and to see that each culture and race embraces a specific significance and value when two-hybrid and paradoxical cultures co-exist and more importantly, all cultural identities deserve recognition.

3. Ambivalence in *TLWM*

Ambivalence ascribes a psychological state marked by contradictions, when one is caught vacillating from one assumption to the other, unable to resolve the contradictions. (Lee 58). Psychoanalysis describes ambivalence as “a continual fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite” (qtd. in Young 161). It is a complex mix of simultaneous attraction and repulsion from an action, person, or object, which is considered debilitating. Bhabha adapted ambivalence to the colonial discourse in describing the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. In *The Location of Culture*, he contends that their relationship is featured by what he calls “double vision” in which each participant sees the other through a lens that is both distorted and revealing. This double vision produces a sense of both fascination and fear, desire, disgust, attraction, and repulsion.

In *TLWM*, Hamid represents what Bhabha calls ambivalence through the characters of Oona and Anders’s father who grew ambivalent feelings towards Anders after his transformation into a dark man. Hamid portrays how these characters dealt with Ander’s loss of his whiteness. He reveals how his metamorphosis affected these characters’ psyches. He

shows Oona and Ander's father's confusion about their feelings towards Anders who became a stranger. They experienced ambivalent feelings that made them live in contradictions, uncertainty, and vitally, they were stranded in a limbo of attraction towards and repulsion from Anders.

In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha states that “the ambivalence of the colonial discourse is reflected in the ‘presence’ of the colonized subject” (97). In this quote, Bhabha suggests that the colonial subject shapes the ambivalence of colonial discourse, as it is both the object of colonial desire and the subject of colonial oppression. This ambivalence is reflected in the way the colonized subject is represented in colonial discourse, which oscillates between attraction and repulsion. He further explains that this “complex identification with these ‘strangers’ who are our own but exist in a relationship of difference and desire that threaten our sense of ourselves and others” (4).

In *TLWM*, Hamid embodies this image of the colonized and the colonizer and how the presence of the colonized triggered the sense of ambivalence in the colonizer. The Conversion of Anders drew the context of colonial discourse through the binary opposition of white and dark people. The white people were reprising the role of the colonizer whereas the dark Anders was confined in the role of the colonized. This gave rise to the rigid assumptions of perceiving the dark Anders as subordinate, bizarre, and a different kind of person that stands out of their crowd. Thus, they perceived him as a foreigner. In doing so, their feelings toward him abruptly altered, and later plunged into a dilemma of opposed moods.

Oona, Anders's girlfriend, captures a sharp and accurate image of ambivalence towards Anders after his transformation into a dark man. Her process of ambivalence went through different stages to be finally recognized. When she learned about his transformation, she envisioned him descending to a lower status as she thought of ugliness, disgust, and

laziness. Hence, as soon as Anders informed her of his new situation, she sensed a sudden “detachment” (TLWM 6). She concluded her inability to sustain the relationship that already does not enjoy seriousness since it is only a high school attraction renewed recently. To her mind, “it was a way of passing time” (TLWM 6). Therefore, she felt no duty to accept Anders’s new situation or provide the support and reassurance he needed. Oona only thought of “her own survival, her own being” (TLWM 7). All of these thoughts and feelings came across her mind during their call that Anders run basically to inform her. Oona’s only path to escape this awkward situation was disconnecting the call and avoiding any further contact with Anders. So, “She has a class to teach” (TLWM 7), was her reason to elude. However, this repulsion was promptly substituted with an attraction when she added that, “she would come by to see him after work” (TLWM 7). She did not realize whether this sudden renege was nurtured by a sense of curiosity to explore the new Anders or just because she did not want to seem prejudicial and uncaring. She could not set herself on one decision, does she want to see him or avoid him? (TLWM 7).

Bhabha notes in *The Location of Culture* that ambivalence is a state of confusion and indecision (7). Hence, Oona’s ambivalence appeared in her lack of determination that takes place in each sort of acquaintance with Anders. When she arrived at his place, she hoped to find him in the middle of doing something as she was not sure of her reaction. She feared her negative feedback will make Anders feel worse, which is undesirable. When Anders emerged, Oona was taken aback, as much as Anders seemed doubtfully himself. Oona’s thoughts and actions during her stay with Anders were contradicted. She thinks of something and does its opposite. She was confused and unable to stick to one decision. She learned when he sat on the sofa, was an invitation for her to sit next to him. She was hesitant, but she accepted his implied invitation. She wanted to provide him with the reassurance that he was desperate for. Nevertheless, she was resistant to being drawn to this role and resistant to lying to him. She

did not want to harm him and worsen his feelings. However, she incautiously approved how he looked utterly a different person. She thought of a smile being a risk yet she smiled. Even when she was disgusted by his “appearance, woundedness and vulnerability” (*TLWM* 8), she joined him in an intimate relationship.

After their night together, Oona sensed discomfort in being touched by this dark-skinned stranger. In her essence, there, laid the feeling of disgust. Hence, repulsion from Anders emerged. Consequently, she discounted his consistent calls and messages. Her sense of repulsion was perfected by her mother who was highly concerned with the pandemic transforming white into dark. She worried about their people [whites] and her daughter Oona. She kept reminding her of her beauty that should not be lowered or dusted. Oona thought of her mother being absurd, but inside her, she does consider her beliefs. Even though Oona thought of herself mainly. However, she could not neglect her sense of humanity. When the media commenced revealing that people stopped being white, a sense of desire lingered in her spirit to inform Anders, she viewed this would be a relief to him. So, she phoned him. By doing so, her state of ambivalence toward Anders is proved to be a continual process.

In the previous stages of her ambivalence, Oona was unconscious of her emotions and actions. However, she started to become conscious of the nature of these feelings of uncertainty, confusion, and indecision. She realized that these feelings were a product of her being unable to connect Anders’s body and soul. She was blocked between them, unsure who Anders was. She thought she has lost him as a person when he lost his whiteness. She thought of him as another person, part and parcel. Accordingly, when she stepped into his house for the first time after his conversion, she was surprised by the place being neat and orderly, everything was put in the place it belonged, reflecting Anders’s same sense of organization. In another scene, when Anders prepared breakfast for her, she expected the omelets “to taste

different and, to taste of his method, his approach, to taste Anders-like, in some way, as his body ...but they did not, they were just omelets, and they were pretty good.” (TLWM 38) Oona became aware of her ambivalent feelings, that this dark man is Anders internally though, a stranger externally. When they went for a walk in the garden, she came face to face with her feelings and could shape an understanding of them as Hamid puts it,

Oona reflected in silence that sometimes he looked normal to her, and sometimes strange, her perception flipping, kind of like when you stared at a blank television screen, a screen showing static, and after a while, you started to see images, weird images like snakes or waves or mountains, or no, quite like that, for it was not his face but more her sense of it that reversed, from one minute to the next, more like a carton of milk that you sniffed and found had gone bad, but then tasted fine, if you took a sip a moment later. (TLWM 27).

Thereby, Oona could identify Anders’s character and her perceptions towards him.

Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* argues that “ambivalence is the simultaneous recognition and disavowal.” (2). It refers to the ongoing process of acknowledging something and rejecting it or distancing it at the same time to manifest resistance. Together, recognition and disavowal create a sense of ambivalence, as the person navigates the tensions between the inclusion and exclusion of the conception. This was embodied in Anders’s father, whose ambivalence was unlike Oona’s who experienced uncertainty and indecision. He was wiser and more conscious of his emotions. He could conceive Anders’s new version along with his perceptions toward him. The conflict is allocated in the state of acknowledgment and resistance to these consumptions that subsequently shaped attraction and repulsion.

Albeit he was informed of Anders’s transformation, he denied what he heard on the other side of the handset of the phone. In disbelief, he arrested the call. The second time, he

asked if he [Anders] was under the influence of drugs or if he was simply jesting. When Anders disapproved, unlike Oona, the father immediately bore in his mind Anders's sentiments and he proceeded to say if he [Anders] "was trying to call him racist" (*TLWM* 13). To cover his shock, he invited Anders to come and show him his metamorphosis. He watched Anders approach. There, he realized that this man was everyone but his son. This scene marked the first moment he set foot in the dichotomous zone of recognition and disavowal.

When Anders visited him as things went worse in the city and militants were driving the darks out of the city, "Anders's father did not like to look at Anders, at what he became" (*TLWM* 32) This recognition of his sentiment of dislike was soon denied and rejected as "he did not like it" (*TLWM* 32). So, to compensate for his rigidity, he shook his hand firmly, firmer than usual. He clapped Anders on the shoulder and squeezed him there as an expressive gesture to show his support because he knew that Anders was searching for self-preservation and safety. He even landed him a rifle to guarantee his security.

Anders's father felt it was his duty not to reveal his perceptions of Anders. Hence, he was vacillating between acknowledgment and denial. In the incident when Anders decided to stay at his father's place after being threatened by the militants, "he was not yet used to Anders, to how Anders looked" (*TLWM* 46). He could understand the militant and people's perspective, "who were afraid of him, or threatened by him, by this dark man his boy had become" (*TLWM* 46). He viewed he would sense the same in their shoes. He remembered Anders being an outcast in society when he was a child. He was a silent and incompetent boy who could not read, write or even tie his laces. He was different so, he abandoned him, which naturally shaped walls between them. He could not recommit the exact mistake he did in the past. Hence, he dusted away his realization and disavowed it. He then, drew down the curtains, in a sense to make Anders feel protection and safety.

Bhabha asserted in *The Location of Culture* (2nd edition, 2004) that ambivalence is a “productive force” (7) and its “power lies in its capacity to resist the binary opposition that structures colonial discourse” (85). He argues that “the very condition of being ambivalent and in-between, the oscillation between positions is precisely what creates the space for political agency and cultural innovation” (31). In these quotes, Bhabha affirms that ambivalence creates a space for political agency because it allows individuals and groups to challenge dominant power and structures by creating alternative, hybrid forms for identity and cultural expressions.

Despite that their dissimilar ambivalent feeling, both Oona and Anders’s father attained this in-between space of ambivalence. They opposed their preconception and their society’s dogma by producing a new “form of cultural knowledge” as Bhabha calls it (126), where they throw up new pedagogical encounters of meanings and representations of political, social, and cultural reconstructions which further led to rearticulating their sensations and their connection with Anders whom they finally embraced and accepted.

Oona’s sense of acceptance went through several stages. Oona’s mother’s absurd perspective on people of color stimulated her to realize the severity and the bias of the world. She thought of it as a “rigid space, inhuman, lifeless void” (*TLWM* 16). It was what encouraged her to administer her first call to Anders after a long period of apathy. Her observations triggered her to feel “off-center, jungled” (*TLWM* 20). There, she dissuaded her assumptions about Anders as an “unknown person”, and she “had to will herself to see Anders in him”. She decided “to sit with him, understood, and simply be” (*TLWM* 20) his company. Their long discussion made her sense the unchangedness of Anders. She concluded, his company felt the same. This sensation drove away her perception of him as a stranger which accordingly initiated other meetings.

Their first walk together after Anders's transformation formed the foundation of her sense of acceptance. Oona learned that what is happening in the town should not be perceived with this big amount of bitterness and cruelty. Knowing about what Anders undergoes from oppression and threat made her sense other dark people and even try to dissuade her mother that "a little extra was sensible...and this much was too much" (*TLWM* 25). When she met Anders she knew that "Anders remained Anders regardless of what he looks" (*TLWM* 34). This even allowed her to see her relationship with him in another way, "to see the Anders in him more clearly". It was about him as a person, what was within him. Hence, "she was glad there with him, glad and human". She viewed that her need was "not mechanical, not mechanism, but organic...more fertile." Through that, Oona not only accepted the new version of Anders but also shaped a new vision of cultural and social assumptions that brought them "close, closer than they had come before" (*TLWM* 34).

Unlike Oona, Anders's father's sense of acceptance was maintained from the start. However, it was deceitful and pretended. He was a "discreet person" who did his best not to show, "not to reveal to Anders that he was anything other than Anders, less than Anders." (*TLWM* 54) He was forced to resist his assumptions about Anders as he was his son and could not harm him as their society did. His sense of acceptance nevertheless shifted. He realized his interpretations were false and the angle from which he identified Anders's condition was improper.

When he was in an acute health condition, he could witness Anders's support, worry, and the risk he underwent to bring his medicaments, when outdoors signified a threat to Anders. He felt "a father feeling, or maybe it was a son feeling, as though he was the son and this person[Anders] was the father, both of them father and both of them son and they had a bond" (*TLWM* 66). He realized thus, he would not permit them to take his boy, the affiliation that

bands them together was the essence. Therefore, “whatever Anders was, whatever his skin was, he was still his father’s son”, “and they would make a passage together”. He satisfyingly “was ready to do right by his son.” It was “a duty that meant more to him than life” (*TLWM* 47). As Oona, acceptance was not the only resolution he attained. Oona could see Anders’s inner, away from racial prejudices and Anders’s father managed to stress on their affiliation rather than Anders’s skin color. Hence, their relationship managed to break the walls that were maintained since Anders’s childhood and enjoy their father-son bond even for a while before his death.

Robert Young suggested, “The theory of Ambivalence is Bhabha’s way of turning the tables on imperial discourse.” (qtd. in Ashcroft et al 14). Inevitably, it was Hamid’s objective equally. Through his characters’ journey of ambivalence, Hamid wants us to look beyond the recognizable borders of racial bias. Correspondingly, to denounce skin color as a surface upon which identity is etched. Hamid wants us through the characters of Oona and Anders’s father to perceive people based on their human nature and essence. For him, it is the most crucial to maintaining real and profound connections.

4. Mimicry in *TLWM*

In his essay “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of colonial discourse”, Bhabha argues that the concept of mimicry and imitation is an important approach to maintaining colonial power dominance. He claims that People who were raised in previously colonized nations often exhibit some admiration for the colonizer and attempt to emulate them. The desire of the colonized to be like the colonizer is known as mimicry. As a result, the colonized subject imitates the colonizer's language, manners, cultural norms, and lifestyle. These imitations are said to be a form of camouflage as Bhabha states “the effect of mimicry is camouflage” (99).

One of the most prevalent tools used by the White colonial authority is mimicry. The White world is considered to be superior and educated, whereas the colonized is perceived to be inferior, slaves, uneducated, and marginalized. The colonized people are made to feel subordinate, second-class people in the colonial discourse by this way of identification. As a result, the natives begin to adopt Western ideologies and customs in an effort to mimic the colonizers' positions of authority and prestige. Bhabha claims that imitation is a clever way to mimic the person for his authority. Therefore, the colonized people acquire an ambiguous identity that is a combination of their own and the colonizers'.

Along with destroying local culture, colonialism also compelled natives to adopt and imitate the colonizer's culture, which led to their cultural extinction. The colonizer subject is reshaped in a way that is somewhat similar to the colonized subject in a phenomenon known as mimicry. The danger of colonial mimicry comes from suppressing the continuation of imperial dominance, as well as the irony generated from the blind imitation of the colonizer.

Hamid in his novel, integrates this image of the colonized and the colonizer and how their relationship affects them both through the process of mimicry. While white people represents the colonizer, Anders embodies the role of the colonized and starts to mimic the colonizer. Colonial discourse and stereotypes created certain images about both white and dark people. The white as being powerful, intellectual, and prior while whatever goes out of the white's circle is perceived as a group of subordinate non-white, inferior, minor, and non-educated. This conventional image makes Anders, as a newly transformed dark man feel subservient in front of this implemented cultural ideology.

Anders started to copy the manners and attitudes of the white people at the gym to assert his whiteness for this he could ignore his darkness; for the sake of being similar to the white in terms of prestigious status and power. This issue is allocated after Ander's

resumption. The gym made him insecure about himself, and what he became. Anders was nervous about gym people's perception, among them, his boss, who suspended his workout to watch Anders deadlift. Ander's physical appearance is prescribed as a big difference and this gave rise to a feeling of being intensely watched by everyone around, although it was not the case. Anders reassures himself that he is always the same Anders he was before by reaching his work weight "a weight no more or less than Anders he was before [...] it was something that had not changed" (*TLWM* 17) However, Anders wondered if his boss felt differently "given how intensely he was watching if he expected the weight would be different as Anders was different" (*TLWM* 17-18).

Being popular at the gym, sharpened anxiety about the "stares, quick, evasive stares" (*TLWM* 18). Around him, word spread that, "he this dark guy, was Anders, had been Anders" (*TLWM* 18). Anders was reassuring himself that the stares are normal, and he was normal. His thinking that he is normal is in fact abnormal. In order to assert his normality, he began to "act undeniably like himself" (*TLWM* 18). However, acting was "more difficult than he imagined" (*TLWM* 18) It was more bizarre that he is trying to be himself.

This awkward artificiality drives Anders to imitate immediately the white people's attitudes at the gym, as Hamid puts it, "Anders started to mirror the others around him, to echo the way they spoke and walked, and moved and the way they held their mouths" (*TLWM* 18). Anders's performance to be like Anders he was before, the white Anders he had been, indisputably failed "because of his sense of being observed, of being on the outside, looked at by those who were in, of messing things up for himself, deeply frustrated, did not go away all day" (*TLWM* 18). As a result of Ander's metamorphosis, he developed an identity that is ambiguous, and fragmented; him being neither fully dark nor fully white, his sense of lack

drives him to mimic the white to prove his normality and priority such as a privileged white person.

Mimicry appears as well in the character of Oona, Ander's girlfriend, as she was highly influenced by the transformation of white people into dark, given that she heard a lot about that, online, on Television, and even outside. Oona's behaviors reflect her beliefs that assimilation into the dark community is a necessity. This latter was the surprising and challenging matter that indicates Oona's desire in imitating the black women's attitudes. She grew feelings towards the transformed black people; she had a certain desire and attraction toward them.

When Oona is checking her social media account, she selected "pictures of her in which she was at her most tan, and her most dark, and often with hair that was fuller and wilder" (*TLWM* 48). She began to play with these pictures turning herself dark to predict her appearance as a dark woman. Moreover, Oona was very satisfied with the results, which she found noticeable and attractive "It was striking, beautiful even" (*TLWM* 48). This admiration goes further to give Oona a great idea about turning herself into a dark person.

Bhabha explains, "The powerful influence of a different culture will cause a tension between the desire of identity stasis and the demand for a change in identity, and mimicry represents a compromise to this tension" (86). Oona was eager to assimilate into the dark culture. So, she worked with concentration to turn herself dark just to resemble those dark people. Oona tried to turn herself into a dark-skinned woman using make-up, and in doing so, she was proud of what she could create. She could finally sense the dark charm and beauty in herself. Furthermore, she predicts how she would look if she turned dark. As Bhabha explains, "the powerful influence of a different culture will cause a tension between the desire

of identity stasis and the demand for a change in identity, and mimicry represents a compromise to this tension” (86).

Oona’s blindly turning herself dark interprets both her desire to be a dark woman assimilated into dark culture as well as her rejection of her native culture, she represents the shift of power. The central and the marginalized cultures exchanged positions. The superior among the inferior majority seems inferior. Hence, mimicry takes hold as an approach to inclusion and belonging. Additionally, as most people in the country became dark, powers shifted and a new way of perception and belief system fully replaces the old one. A new perception emerged as people accepted both their interior and exterior identities and started to be proud of whom they had become regardless of how they appeared, what race they were, or what group they belonged to. After all, they concluded that they are all humans. Awareness was risen regarding the futility of using one's race, gender, or religion to identify oneself in hierarchical societies. As a result, racial dogmas were altered and people began to see humanity in new ways, which was Hamid’s aim mainly.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter is to analyze the selected characters of the novel in the light of Bhabha’s postcolonial concepts (Otherness, Cultural Difference, Ambivalence, and Mimicry) for the sake of bringing into sharp focus the effects of whiteness on dark people mainly and whites accordingly. We started the analysis with the concept of Otherness. Through this concept, we emphasized Anders being othered by himself and his surroundings after his transformation into dark to highlight Hamid’s aim to bring out the dark inferiority in the American community and by accentuating the transformation to all the white people in the city. He denounces white privilege and superiority. Then, we explored the concept of Cultural Difference by analyzing the character of Anders being caught between two cultures and

identities in response to the intra-antra misrepresentation of his self-concept. This guided him to put a foot in the third space where he bridges the interstices between cultural differences and creates a new hybrid identity and culture that are both embraced and accepted. Hamid created this image to uphold the racial ideologies that shape cultural boundaries. He, through Anders, breaks down the binary opposition of dark and white and affords a recognizable position to all cultures and races.

Furthermore, we spotlighted the concept of Ambivalence through the characters of Oona and Anders's father to highlight that the loss of whiteness gives rise to ambivalence based on the state of confusion, indecision, and contradictions that obstructs the people's articulation of each other, interpersonal perceptions, and relations. We further marked ambivalence as a force that shapes an in-between space where assumptions towards ourselves and others are redefined, which was Hamid's objective in denouncing whiteness as a measure that determines one's status in society. Finally, we discussed the issue of mimicry under the whiteness/ darkness scope referring to Anders who attempted to copy whites after his transformation to assert and approve his original whiteness, and Oona who has modified her original skin color to both senses the dark charm and predict her appearance after transformation. It was Hamid's approach to disturb the normality of white superiority and to drive attention to dark aesthetics.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The Last White Man is a discomfoting book that confronts the pervasive construct that beguiles humanity in the real world. Mohsin Hamid's surreal narrative explores the issue of whiteness and makes the reader savors the absurdities and uncomfortable truths about power and identity that are generated by the construct of race. The novel is a Postcolonial work that aims to subvert the racial dynamics that were shaped by the colonial discourse. It is dedicated to "Becky" which is a pejorative American slang term that is associated with a white girl who is ignorant about racial and social issues. Eventually, Hamid addresses his literary work to white Americans who are uneducated and negligent of racial bias. Through the story of Anders, a white man who has been transformed into a dark person, he describes the apocalypse long feared by white supremacists. He made them walk a mile in the shoes of people of color to perceive this racial bigotry from their perspective.

This allegorical tale demonstrates the significance of whiteness in American communities. It throws light on the binary opposition of white and dark cultures. It strongly depicts white superiority and supremacy at the expense of dark inferiority. Hence, the story's focus was not laid on the unsettling metamorphosis but it evokes the representations of the dark-skinned people in this unnamed American town and the stereotypes Anders underwent as a dark man. It highlights the significance of whiteness by puzzling through the characters' disorientation upon the loss of their whiteness. The potency of this speculative conceit is to ironically denounce its emphasis. When the darkening that befalls Anders affected all the citizens in what is so-called racial mourning, satirically, the discrimination no longer takes effect in the town. It is Hamid's approach to display the idea of ridicule. When the paradigm shifts; white people become people of color, they learn. Therefore, attitudes and ideologies alter.

A happy ending seems too far-fetched. Hamid resisted simplistic resolutions. Thus, he created a utopian world, stripped of racial prejudice. He notes with Anders is saying that perhaps “something new was being born.” He realizes the circumscribed, depressed life he has lived as a white man. Accordingly, he traces the soothingness the individuals will sustain beyond racial identification, discrimination, and bias.

In light of what has been said, our choice of conducting the current research upon analyzing Mohsin Hamid’s *The Last White Man* (2022) seeks to explore the issue of whiteness and reveal its impacts on both white and dark-skinned people in the American community. This study demonstrates how this latter affects culture and identity as it shows how whiteness is employed to articulate them in terms of inferiority, superiority, inclusion, and exclusion. We further show in this work how whiteness affects people’s reactions to others and their conception of themselves. Our work is guided by Homi Bhabha’s postcolonial concepts of Otherness, Cultural Difference, Ambivalence, and Mimicry.

The first chapter is the historical and theoretical framework of the study. It consists of three sections. The first section explores the emergence of the PEL. It provides a chronological overview of the relevant historical events, developments, and factors that have shaped the research topic. The second section comprises the biography, bibliography, and literary influences of Mohsin Hamid to afford a valuable insight into themes, motifs, beliefs, and values of the author’s work as well as the literary traditions that have influenced him to produce this literary work. This section furthermore provides a critical review of the novel. It encompasses the summary and the socio-historical background of the novel to offer the reader an understanding of the context in which the novel is sketched. The third section opts for the postcolonial literature and theory, where we propose the concepts of Bhabha that are the skeleton of our analysis that takes hold in the second chapter.

The second chapter, hence, is the practical phase of the study. It is devoted to the implementation of Bhabha's concepts in the selected novel to analyze the issue of whiteness which is the research subject. Bhabha's concepts are applied to the nominated characters (Anders, Oona, and Anders's father) in order to trace to what extent whiteness impacts the white and dark people living in America.

In view of this, Bhabha's concept of Otherness is introduced through the character of Anders. We marked the moderations that occurred in his and others' behaviors towards him after his transformation into dark. We emphasized the stereotypes he underwent as a dark man in an American Community to display Hamid's trial to denounce white privilege. Under the concept of Cultural Difference, we discussed how skin color as a difference among humans is adequate for cultural identification. Through the character of Anders, we analyze how Anders's transformation affected his self-conception. Through this concept, we traced how hybridity and ambivalence enable the emergence of the third space, where the character developed a new hybrid understanding of his culture and identity. We marked Hamid's approach to stepping beyond the boundaries of cultural differences where every culture is recognized.

While Cultural Difference deals with Anders's self-conception, Ambivalence highlights Oona and Anders's father's conceptions of Anders and themselves. It spotlights the inner confusion, indecisions, paradoxical feeling of attraction, and repulsion from Anders after his transformation into dark. Here Hamid disrupts skin color as a measure to identify identities. Finally, we presented the concept of mimicry through the characters of Anders and Oona. We attempted to discuss how mimicry is implemented by the characters of Anders and Oona as a tool for inclusion. Through this technique, Hamid aims to shift the power paradigm; when the marginal becomes central and vice versa.

By conducting this research in analyzing the issue of whiteness in *TLWM* in relation to Bhabha's postcolonial concepts, we reached the following conclusions. Whiteness is inaugurated as a scale to identify cultures and identities in American societies. It is constructed and perpetuated with a particular focus on the privileges and advantages that white people have historically enjoyed and continue to benefit to the present day. People of color are still considered inferior, subordinate, and violent. Therefore, they are excluded, discriminated and consistently regarded as an Other. Skin color defines people's status in society, and their self-concept is defined accordingly. It is also a surface upon which identity is etched. Hence, people's reactions and perceptions of each other rely on the degree of whiteness of their skin color; the more white the person is, the more superior and civilized he is conceived. Mimicry is a tool for inclusion, a person tends to mimic in order to belong and beliefs change attitudes. If people change their implicit bias, attitudes will be moderated correspondingly.

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Résumé

Cette dissertation explore la question de la blancheur dans le roman de Mohsin Hamid, "Le Dernier Homme Blanc" (2022). Le roman examine le dilemme de la blancheur tel qu'il est dépeint par l'auteur au sein de la communauté américaine. L'analyse emprunte donc les concepts d'Altérité, de Différence Culturelle, d'Ambivalence et de Mimétisme tels qu'expliqués par le théoricien Homi K. Bhabha pour analyser les réactions des personnages vis-à-vis d'eux-mêmes d'une part, et les réactions des autres qui les entourent face à la perte de la blancheur d'autre part. La blancheur est l'un des signes raciaux d'inégalité qui ont émergé en Amérique pour établir la domination et maintenir le contrôle social sur les minorités. Elle a été présentée comme un outil pour construire une hiérarchie raciale. Elle a perpétué des inégalités systématiques en accordant des privilèges et des avantages aux personnes blanches tout en opprimant et excluant délibérément les personnes de couleur, comme le montre implicitement le roman de Mohsin Hamid, et comme le souligne clairement cette thèse. Mots-clés : Blancheur, Altérité, Différence Culturelle, Ambivalence, Mimétisme.

ملخص

يستكشف هذا البحث العلمي قضية البياض في رواية محسن حميد "الرجل الأبيض الأخير" (2022). تستكشف الرواية معضلة البياض كما يصورها الكاتب داخل المجتمع الأمريكي. لذلك، يستعير الباحثون مفاهيم "الأخرية" و"الاختلاف الثقافي" و"التناقض" و"التقليد" كما يشرحها النظري هومي ك. بهابها لتحليل ردود أفعال الشخصيات تجاه ذاتهم من جهة، وردود أفعال الآخرين تجاه فقدان البياض من جهة أخرى. يعد البياض من بين العلامات العرقية التي ظهرت في أمريكا لتأسيس الهيمنة والحفاظ على السيطرة الاجتماعية على الأقليات. تم تصويره على أنه أداة لبناء التسلسل العرقي. وقد استمر في عدم المساواة من خلال ضمان الامتيازات والمزايا للأفراد البيض بينما يتم قمع واستبعاد السود وغيرهم عمدًا. كما يوضح مضمون الرواية المذكورة لمحسن حميد، وكما يبين البحث العلمي الحالي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: البياض، الأخرية، الاختلاف الثقافي، التناقض، التقليد.