
Exploring the Nexus of Psychological and Physical Racism in *The Last White Man*

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Abstract:

This study meticulously analyses Hamid's novel: *The Last White Man*, through the lens of Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic's Critical Race Theory, utilizing everyday racism and counter storytelling as my guiding principles. Through the narrative of Anders Hamid reflects on the racial complexities and micro-aggressions that the dark persons encounter on habitual basis. The novel challenges the Western claim of inclusion and diversity, and portrays the wicked practice of psychological and physical racism. The narrative unfolds the interconnectedness of both forms and asserts that psychological racism is more harmful and stress provocative which cripples the personality of the victims. Hamid being a colored author uses his unique voice to advocates the creation of an ideal future of equity and belonging. A future that leaves no room of hatred, biases, prejudice, and stereotypes. A world free from discrimination and hate. This utopian anticipation demands impartiality from white people which is subject to their self-righteous hegemony and those who have benefited from the status quo may not be eager to embrace change

Key Words: Everyday Racism, Counter Storytelling, Micro-aggression, Psychological Racism, Hegemony

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The concept of race has evolved significantly over time. Initially, in the 14th century, the term had roots in Scandinavian and French languages, referring to a strong current (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). By the 16th century, it denoted people of common ancestry (Online Dictionary of Etymology, 2001-2024). Britannica notes its use as a classification factor among humans in the late 16th century, evolving in the 18th century to a colonial perspective, where White people emerged as free while Amerindians and Africans were subjected to slavery.

Agustin Fuentes et al. (2019) argue that race sorts individuals based on social, cultural, and political motives rather than biological realities. This paradigm is rooted in Western oppression and discrimination. Merriam-Webster and the Cambridge Dictionary define racism as systemic oppression and unfair treatment based on race, respectively (Merriam-Webster, n.p; Cambridge Dictionary, n.p). The Australian Human Rights Commission expands this definition, highlighting the systemic nature of racism (Australian Human Rights Commission, n.p).

This research, "Exploring the Nexus of Psychological and Physical Racism in '*The Last White Man*,'" seeks to deconstruct racism through the experiences of people of color and the

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oppression they face. Psychological racism, as discussed by Angela Harris (2001), involves micro-aggressions rooted in White supremacy and stereotypes. Despite liberal claims of inclusivity, Critical Race Theory (CRT) argues that institutionalized racism persists in new forms.

Historically, racism in the U.S. began with the enslavement of Arawak Indians and the transatlantic slave trade. Post-9/11, South Asian Americans, particularly Muslims, faced increased discrimination due to the association of terrorism with Islam (Vinay Harpalani, 2013). Mohsin Hamid's experiences as a Pakistani-American reflect these racial challenges, particularly in the wake of 9/11.

In "The Last White Man," Hamid explores racism through the character Anders, who wakes up to find his skin color changed. This sudden transition challenges his social status and exposes him to psychological and physical racism. The novel portrays Anders's struggle with his new identity and the societal reaction to his brownness, illustrating the deeply ingrained prejudices of the West.

1.2 Research Methodology

Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged in the 1970s, building on critical legal studies and radical feminism, drawing from theorists like Antonio Gramsci and Jacques Derrida. Pioneers like Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado sought to address subtle racism prevalent in the 1970s and 1980s (Angela Harris, 2001).

This research employs CRT, focusing on everyday racism and the unique voice of color. Primary data is derived from "The Last White Man," while secondary data includes CRT literature and reviews. Key aspects analyzed include Anders's reaction to his transition, Oona's response, and the community's perception.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

This study meticulously examines "The Last White Man" through the lens of CRT, emphasizing everyday racism experienced by people of color. Hamid's protagonist, Anders, faces both psychological and physical racism, raising questions about America's proclaimed racial inclusivity. The narrative portrays the ongoing challenges faced by colored individuals in a society that claims diversity and inclusion.

1.4 Research Questions

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1. How does Hamid's protagonist experience and perpetuate everyday racism simultaneously?
2. What stages of rejection and acceptance does Anders encounter while coping with the change in skin color?
3. How do highly conservative-minded elders like Anders's father and Oona's mother react to this drastic change?
4. How do the characters in the novel engage in challenging racial norms and stereotypes?

1.5 Aims and Objectives

The study aims to highlight psychological and physical racism faced by people of color in white-dominated spaces, using CRT as a framework. It seeks to expose the facade of inclusivity claimed by the West and proposes recommendations for addressing everyday racism.

1. To explore how Hamid's protagonist experiences and perpetuates everyday racism.
2. To examine the stages of rejection and acceptance Anders undergoes.
3. To analyze reactions from conservative elders to the change.
4. To evaluate how characters challenge racial norms and stereotypes.

1.6 Scope

Hamid, a versatile writer, combines Pakistani and American cultures in his works. This study focuses on his latest novel, "The Last White Man," which offers a fresh perspective on racism and inclusion. The research aligns with the author's biographical elements and personal experiences, making it a compelling subject for analysis.

1.7 Research Gap

"The Last White Man" is relatively new and offers extensive scope for scholarly exploration. CRT, while established in law and education, is less explored in literature. Previous studies have focused on different theoretical frameworks, highlighting a gap in the application of CRT to Hamid's work. This research aims to fill that gap by meticulously analyzing racism through CRT.

1.8 Personal Rational

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Personal experiences with discrimination and a deep interest in South Asian literature motivate this study. The author's narratives resonate with the researcher, providing a means for catharsis and a platform to address everyday racism.

1.9 Thesis Statement

Anders's narrative in "The Last White Man" reflects Hamid's struggle as a person of color in the U.S. It challenges the American liberal ideology and exposes new forms of racism, which are more insidious and psychologically damaging, thus questioning the notion of a post-racial society.

Literature Review

This section aims to nourish the enlightenment of readers about the topic, laying a solid foundation to support our subject matter. It assists in making our arguments rational and provides a multidimensional perspective on our subject. The selected method for the theoretical literature review is narrative, following a chronological order. To enhance reader convenience, the main body is further subdivided into three sections: (A) Scholarly articles and reviews on (B) Evaluation of CRT in literature, (C) Evaluation of CRT in Education and other disciplines. This *The Last White Man*, categorization strengthens the arguments, makes the subject versatile, and helps readers understand the concepts.

Muhammad Ali et. al. (2023), evaluate the concept of change, transition, and transformation in Hamid's novel; *The Last White Man* (2022). The study is based upon Panarchy: Understanding Transformation in Human and Natural System (2002), edited by Gunderson and Hollings, and Johan Kotter's Leading Change (1996). The former principle addresses the concepts of change and transformation, while the later acknowledges the constructive and fruitful utilization of change and transformation for good at a larger canvas. Panarchy is defined as "Nothing in nature can remain static indefinitely, and even when massive changes affect entire societies or the climate, they may all be part of a larger, adjustive system known as panarchy" (Mariani, 2013). Anders drastic change is brought to parallel consideration with Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* (1915). Kafka's protagonist Gregor Samsa's undergoes a physical change at a personal level with immediate bad consequences upon close family circle, while Ander undergoes through a racial transformation, he becomes brown, which is not only a matter of color, but also a complete derogatory cognitive cycle. It passes from Anders and soon spread far and wide like a pandemic with collective harsh consequences at a broader level. Anders and Samsa perceive this change differentially, the former, though

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initially, disillusioned, cope the matter and later on the discourse becomes normal, the later gives up and failed to cope. Thus this comparison is myopic and irrational according to Muhammad Ali et. Al. (2023). Part 2, vividly, depicts transition as Anders is not the only brown person in the town, brownness gradually becomes a habitual exercise. Chaos and turmoil break in, riots, suicide, murder, and lawlessness become mundane course of action. Transformation reflects the smooth ending of the fiction. Anders father, the last white man in the fictional town dies. Brownness is no more an alien aspect of the society. It becomes a majority race and the social turmoil settled. The study asserts that change, transition and transformation, though initially, bring unfamiliar and drastic consequences, eventually, settles in harmony and productive results. It bears sweet fruit and constrictive social wellbeing.

Dr. Ayesha Asfrac et. al. (2023), dissect Hamid's *The Last White Man* in the light of Lyotard's postmodern metanarratives and micronarratives. The former echoes the ever celebrated grand truths of pre-great Wars. The religious concept about human's evolution, the birth of a savior, invention of anesthetics and other notions of science, progress and technology. The later entertains the difference in opinions and behavior of people represent mini-narratives against metanarratives. This study challenges the metanarrative of white men's racial hegemony over blacks and celebrates plurality. In the beginning, racial bigotry is evident, people of color are marginalized and are subject to humiliation and hatred. Anders being the first victim of transformation receives both internal and external contempt. Oona, his dearest companion couldn't hide her alien gaze in their first encounter. Oona's mother derogatory comments on people of color, "we need our own spaces, and the dark people could have their own places or do their own evil things or whatever, we wouldn't stop them" (p.88). Such and other infinite instances are observed in the beginning, but soon a realization becomes evident. Anders father, who couldn't dire a gaze at Anders, becomes a lap of relief for him, who provides him with food, shelter, gun, and ammunition for self-defense. Oona happily accepts Anders and they get married. The society after all the chaos accepts the change and the turmoil transforms into harmony, though, there were little exceptions. The blacks who were marginalized, get spot light and peace prevails at large verses. The study concludes by asserting, that in postmodern era racial metanarrative is a misfit concept. It challenges such stereotypes and celebrates inclusivity.

According to Kapur and Naik (2023) "Hamid took that idea from *The Metamorphosis* of Franz Kafka and *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* of Lewis". (p.1758) and "Hamid's beginning in this novel purposefully borrows language from Lewis and Kafka" (1758) In

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addition to intertextuality, the researchers claim that the story is also relevant to Hamid's childhood years which were spent in California while his father was completing his doctorate from Stanford University. Later on, Hamid came back to America to study fiction writing with Joyce Carol Oates and Toni Morrison. Thus, he enjoyed a life as half white man, however, the scenario changed after the Sep 9/11 attack, when Americans started judging him, and he was looked at with suspicion of being a fundamentalist/terrorist. "The dark color is unambiguously linked to evil and immorality in this context of the text." (p.1761) Hamid was often detained for interrogation at airports and faced discrimination on trains and buses. *The Last White Man* is based on his memories of facing discrimination on the basis of religion and race in Western context.

Yasir Abbas et. Al. (2022). *The Last White Man* investigates the racial and cognitive ambiguities of colored persons, using Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Mask* as a lens to evaluate the text. The predominant idea of this framework is to address the profound desire of a black person to become white. It illustrates the psyche-social troubles of color persons on account of white men, which develop an inferiority complex and persuade them to become white, in order to entertain the white men's privileges as Fanon's says that the black man "colored by his inferiority, the white by his superiority alike believe in accordance with a neurotic orientation" (Fanon, 1993, p. 27). The primary principles of Fanon's work utilized in this study are neurosis, alienation, collective catharsis, conscious and unconscious. Apart from the aforementioned troubles, psychopathology is suggested as a clinical procedure to combat this issue. Neurosis is cognitive instability which is a result of successive multi traumas. Alienation refers to feeling misfit and "self-strangeness" in one's surroundings. Anders is the victim of neurosis which hinders his attitude and behavior as immediate symptoms and latterly, affects his judgement, perception and actions without his acknowledgement. It throws him into a perpetual self-denial and social alienation from every extrovert setting. finally, through collective catharsis the researcher concludes the study as the fiction ends smoothly with the normality of the situation and healing of Anders from the trauma.

McAlpin in his book review opines that the story of *The Last White Man* is quite related to Hamid's own life as a Muslim in a foreign country. The reviewer quotes Hamid, "I was 30 then and had lived 18 of my years in the West." But, with time, Hamid realized that he had lost his whiteness. He says, "Not that I had been truly white. But I had been white enough –to partake in many of the benefits of whiteness" (n.p)

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Novilaras Ratri's (2019) critical examination of six tenets from Delgado and Stefancic's Critical Race Theory in Angie Thomas' novel "*The Hate U Give*" unveils the intricate layers of societal complexities. Through the lenses of everyday racism, material determinism, social construction, differential racialization, intersectionality, and the voice of color mechanism, Ratri meticulously dissects the narrative of Starr and Khalil, a teenager-colored couple. Khalil, innocently minding his own business, becomes the unfortunate victim of police brutality, as detective Cruise unjustly shoots him thrice. While Starr ardently seeks justice for Khalil, she finds herself unjustly deprived of her rightful due in the pursuit of a fair trial. Ratri skillfully highlights the pervasive nature of institutionalized racial discrimination, stereotypes, and the omnipresent everyday racism faced by people of color in the United States.

David Gillborn (2015) examined the utility of intersectionality as a predominant principle of CRT in a two-year project. Founded by Economic and social Research Council (ESRC). He proposed that racism retained a primacy for critical race scholars in three distinct manners, empirical primacy (as a central axis of oppression in the everyday reality of schools, personal/autobiographical primacy (as a vital Component in how critical race scholars view themselves and their experience of the world), and political primacy (as a point of group coherence and activism).

María C. Ledesma and Dolores Calderón (2015) evaluated CRT mechanism in education at K-12 and higher levels. They addressed and streamlined discrimination faced by students of color in schools. This article also portrays the shallowness and myopic attitude of institutions towards the minority groups, keeping in view the education policy, pedagogy and school's atmosphere.

The available resources showcase only a couple of instances of scholarly literature on *The Last White Man*. The aforementioned reviews explore the object in the light of postmodernism, as a break away from racial marginalization, change, transition and transformation, as a matter of universal cycle, which result in ultimate good, and racial bigotry and metamorphosis The research topic; Exploring the nexus of psychological and physical racism in *The Last White Man*, meticulously, analyze the object of the study, utilizing Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic' Critical Race Theory. The study predominantly stresses on every-day racism, and voice of color (counter storytelling) as my guiding principles from the theory. Everyday racism is the ordinary experience of desies in the States. The novel unfolds intricate layers of everyday racism, which reveals the hypocrisy of the West, who claims racial inclusivity. In reality, they

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are the embodiment of cognitive biases and stereotypes. The institutions might be impartial and objective, but the white man sitting on a white collar desk their exercise the millennium old racial stereotypes. Thus people of color become victim of racism on account of his psychological illness. *The Last White Man*, echoes numerous instances of psychological racism and the proposed theory provides a concrete mechanism to address this issue.

Theoretical Framework

This research utilizes a qualitative method to analyze Hamid's novel "The Last White Man" through the lens of Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic's Critical Race Theory (CRT). The chapter is structured as follows: Background of the issue, Historical context of CRT, Introduction to CRT, Basic tenets of CRT (Everyday racism, interest convergence, and voice of color), Instances of CRT in literature, and Work Mechanism.

Background of the Issue

Despite contemporary claims of inclusivity and personal liberty, racial discrimination persists. The West, especially the United States, often denies its prevalence, citing civil rights, human rights commissions, NGOs, and fair trials. However, CRT argues that racial discrimination remains, albeit "underground" or "undercover," and continues to manifest through cognitive superiority-inferiority dynamics, a deep psychological phenomenon (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Historical Context of Critical Race Theory

CRT emerged in the 1970s within the legal discipline to combat legalized discrimination, drawing from movements like critical legal studies, radical feminism, and the Black Power and Chicano movements. Pioneered by Derrick Bell and others, CRT developed as civil rights movements waned, necessitating a scholarly framework to address the concerns of people of color. Early scholars, including Bell, Delgado, and Alan Freeman, alongside lawyers, activists, and legal scholars, held initial workshops to build consensus and formulate the framework (Harris, 2001).

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Introduction to Critical Race Theory

CRT examines race, racism, and power, demarcating long-standing stereotypes and prejudices exercised by white people to undermine people of color. It highlights traditional and novel forms of racism and proposes frameworks to combat these challenges. CRT studies the discriminatory aspects of the legal system, educational discrepancies, and the cognitive superiority complex of white people, recognizing and addressing these issues through scholarly means. According to Delgado and Stefancic, the worst form of racism is psychological, termed everyday racism, where people of color face habitual humiliation (Tyson, 2006).

Basic Tenets of CRT

1. Everyday racism is a common, ordinary experience for people of color in the United States.
2. Racism results from interest convergence or material determinism.
3. Race is socially constructed.
4. Racism often manifests as differential racialization.
5. Everyone's identity is shaped by intersectionality.
6. Racial minorities possess a unique voice of color.

Our primary goals are everyday racism and voice of color.

Everyday Racism and Voice of Color

Everyday racism refutes the liberal call of White Americans who believe racism is only tangible, like public assassinations or police brutality. In reality, the most distressing form of racism is psychological humiliation, encountered daily by people of color. Examples include being followed in stores, lack of civility, mocking, and bullying through overgeneralized titles (Essed, 2002; Harpalani, 2013). Everyday racism involves white parents' discriminatory behavior towards their offspring's black friends and suitors, celebrating white suitors regardless of the competence of people of color.

Psychological hegemony allows white individuals to feel superior, often manifesting in subtle behaviors like rough looks at traffic signals, financial distrust at workplaces, and immediate suspicion during crises. This type of racism leads to disenfranchisement, where people of color are labeled as "over sensitive" (Essed, 2002), masking the reality of racism

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under a guise of inclusivity. Recognizing and addressing psychological racism is crucial, as it drains people of color's energy, self-confidence, and self-esteem, exposing them to depression and anxiety.

"Counter-storytelling" or the voice of color is a significant contribution of African, American, and Latina writers, portraying the oppression and humiliation experienced due to race. Critical race theorists argue that colored writers are better positioned to narrate their racial experiences compared to white writers. This approach aligns with Delgado and Stefancic's idea that race is socially constructed and not a biological phenomenon. The "legal storytelling" movement encourages black and brown writers to recount their experiences with racism and the legal system, providing unique perspectives to challenge dominant narratives (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Instances of CRT in Literature

Novilaras Ratri's (2019) examination of CRT in Angie Thomas' "The Hate U Give" reveals societal complexities through everyday racism, material determinism, social construction, differential racialization, intersectionality, and voice of color. David Gillborn's (2015) project on intersectionality and María C. Ledesma and Dolores Calderón's (2015) evaluation of CRT in education highlight its utility in addressing discrimination faced by students of color. These instances support the use of CRT as an evaluative lens in this project.

Work Mechanism

This project uses primary data from "The Last White Man" and secondary data from CRT literature, articles, reviews, and author interviews. Primary data includes key elements from Hamid's novel: the protagonist's thoughts, reactions to transformation, interactions with other characters, and societal responses. These are analyzed to identify words, phrases, sentences, and streams of consciousness that reflect CRT tenets.

Discussion and Analysis

Hamid begins the narrative with Anders' transformation into "deep and undeniable brown" (Hamid, 2022, p. 09). Anders becomes skeptical, perceiving it as a hallucination and an existential nightmare, leaving him in a state of denial and cognitive dissonance. He is terrified, seeing his new brown skin as an invasion, and in a fit of rage, he breaks the mirror reflecting his transformed self (Hamid, 2022, p. 10). Anders' transformation strips him of his white identity, pushing him into isolation as he grapples with the loss of his former self (Hamid, 2022,

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p. 11). He struggles to reconcile his new appearance with his ingrained perceptions, likening his new skin to something alien and unwelcome (Hamid, 2022, p. 12).

Anders' cognitive turmoil reflects broader societal prejudices. His initial reaction underscores the deeply rooted biases and violence directed at people of color. The loss of his white identity leads to a profound identity crisis, as he associates his former privileges with his whiteness. His smile, once a symbol of his mother's love, now seems tainted by his new brownness (Hamid, 2022, p. 15). This reaction highlights the absurdity of racialized beauty standards.

In public, Anders conceals his identity to avoid the judgment of his white counterparts, who now perceive him as inferior. His interactions at the grocery store and with the clerk illustrate the racial discrimination faced by people of color. The cold treatment he receives contrasts sharply with the courtesy he once took for granted (Hamid, 2022, p. 13). His alienation deepens, as he experiences firsthand the social segregation and humiliation imposed on people of color in the U.S. and the West (Hamid, 2022, p. 14).

Hamid portrays Anders' duality: his pre-transition white privilege and post-transition alienation. This juxtaposition exposes the inherent racism in societal structures. Anders' father's reaction further underscores this, as he struggles to accept his son's new appearance, symbolizing the broader societal inability to embrace racial equality (Hamid, 2022, p. 27). The transition shakes his father's perception of beauty and worth, previously tied to whiteness.

Anders' relationship with Oona is equally strained. Oona's initial reaction to Anders' transformation is one of shock and discomfort. Her response reveals the ingrained racial biases even within intimate relationships. Despite her assurances, her underlying discomfort and self-centered thoughts become evident (Hamid, 2022, p. 16). Their first physical interaction post-transformation is awkward and filled with emotional disconnect, reflecting their struggle to adapt to the new racial dynamic (Hamid, 2022, p. 20).

The narrative continues with Anders' father, who is initially in disbelief and struggles to accept his son's transformation. This response highlights the generational transmission of racial prejudices and the deep-seated discomfort with racial diversity (Hamid, 2022, p. 26). His father's reaction is rooted in a subconscious association of beauty and worth with whiteness, which Anders' new appearance disrupts (Hamid, 2022, p. 27).

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As Anders navigates his new identity, he faces overt racism from his boss at the gym. His boss's remark, "I would have killed myself," exemplifies the extreme prejudice Anders encounters (Hamid, 2022, p. 31). This reaction reflects the societal perception that a person's worth is diminished by their race. Despite the boss's attempt to correct himself, the damage is done, and Anders is left to cope with the psychological toll of such blatant racism.

Transformation and Social Rejection

Before his transition, Anders was well-liked and known as "doc" at the gym due to his competence and helpful nature (Hamid, 2022, p. 33). After his transition, his social status plummeted, and he became the subject of "stares, quick, evasive stares" (Hamid, 2022, p. 32). Anders experienced a dramatic shift from being popular to feeling marginalized and uncomfortable (Hamid, 2022, p. 33). He felt paranoid and skeptical, wondering if society truly reacted to his condition as he perceived or if his anxiety stemmed from an inferiority complex (Hamid, 2022, p. 33).

Mimicry and Identity Crisis

Struggling for reassurance, Anders attempted to engage in his usual banter to seem like himself, though he felt like an outsider (Hamid, 2022, p. 33). His transformation led to a loss of self, synonymous with the loss of his previous privileges and confidence. To be accepted, Anders resorted to mimicry and imitation (Bhabba, 1994, p.122). He tried to mirror those around him, mimicking their behavior and speech to fit in (Hamid, 2022, p. 33).

Anders' efforts to imitate others indicated his dissatisfaction with his new identity. He considered his white colleagues superior and tried to bridge the gap by adopting their norms and values, ultimately losing his sense of self (Hamid, 2022, p. 33). Despite his efforts, his mimicry was unsuccessful, leading to frustration and a sense of being an outsider.

Everyday Racism and Psychological Impact

The conservative society's everyday racism fueled Anders' paranoia. He faced stares, bullying, contact avoidance, curses, humiliation, and segregation, resulting in a loss of confidence and well-being. He avoided public appearances and wore a cap and hoodie to conceal himself (Hamid, 2022, p. 40). The initial lack of support from his loved ones exacerbated his troubles, leading to feelings of alienation and frustration.

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Seasonal Symbolism

Hamid uses the change from autumn to winter to symbolize the decline in Anders' situation (Hamid, 2022, p. 40). The arrival of winter signifies a loss of hope and success for Anders and the colored community. This section examines the intricate relationship between psychological and physical racism, highlighting how psychological racism affects the victims' physical health and well-being.

Personal and Community Violence

Physical violence began at a personal level, with a white man shooting his darker self (Hamid, 2022, p. 39). This internal conflict reflected the hatred a white man had for a colored person. As more people transitioned, brownness spread rapidly, causing discomfort and alienation. A client at the gym turned brown but left due to the alien gaze, demonstrating that the white community would not easily relinquish its hegemony.

Institutionalized Racism

The plot is set in a conservative society where victims might accept their fate, but social prejudices do not allow them to live in peace (Hamid, 2022, p. 43). The society's actions make the colored person feel uncomfortable and misfit. The struggles of learning a foreign language are likened to the struggle of adapting to a new racial identity (Hamid, 2022, p. 43-44). This struggle is a constant endeavor for colored persons in the West.

Eruptions of Violence

Violence in the town escalated with institutional support for militants (Hamid, 2022, p. 49). The Western democracies, despite their claims of fairness and equality, perpetuate partiality and bias. The mayor's calls for calm were hypocritical, as militants received institutional support and ammunition. The police made no real effort to stop them (Hamid, 2022, p. 49).

Anders' hopes for harmony at the gym were dashed as men who had known each other for years began to act like strangers or worse, like enemies (Hamid, 2022, p. 56). Brownness was perceived as a deadly pandemic, leading to contact avoidance and self-centered behavior. Physical encounters became routine, and the community failed to deescalate the violence (Hamid, 2022, p. 57).

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Community Tension

The town's atmosphere became tense, with panic in the air and people adopting a survival mode (Hamid, 2022, p. 61). The media propagated the turmoil, increasing the discomfort of colored persons and their acquaintances. Anders' father and Oona were particularly affected by the news, making their survival miserable (Hamid, 2022, p. 62).

Psychological and Physical Survival

Anders' insecurity led him to stay close to his rifle, avoiding going out and feeling imprisoned (Hamid, 2022, p. 65). The white community's brutality and humiliation forced colored persons to resist and retaliate. The continuous struggle for survival, both psychological and physical, was evident in the violent confrontations (Hamid, 2022, p. 78).

Isolation and Nostalgia

The town's destruction negatively impacted Anders, making him feel isolated and nostalgic for his childhood and late mother. His father's deteriorating health added to his misery (Hamid, 2022, p. 81). The chaos in the town, supported by institutionalized brutality, served as a final blow to his sense of security.

Search for a Cure

The town's intellect gathered in search of a remedy for the transformation, labeling it a horror and seeking a "miracle drug" to undo the brownness (Hamid, 2022, p. 81). This effort symbolized the white community's desire to eradicate the perceived threat to their hegemony.

Psychological and Physical Racism

Psychological racism included racial micro-aggressions, contact avoidance, derogatory remarks, and alienation (Hamid, 2022, p. 62). Physical racism involved social propaganda, killings, deployment of militants, and failure of the administration to maintain law and order. The institutionalized support for brutality highlighted the deep-seated prejudice and discrimination in the society (Hamid, 2022, p. 49).

Analysis of Oona's Mother in Hamid's "The Last White Man"

Symbolic Representation of Racism

Oona's mother symbolizes the entrenched racism of the West. Her character illustrates deep-seated biases, prejudice, and stereotypes. She views white people as civilized and superior,

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while people of color are seen as inferior. This dichotomy is reinforced over centuries, leading even people of color to internalize these stereotypes. Hamid uses Critical Race Theory to highlight how Oona's mother exhibits everyday racism.

Initial Dialogue and Racist Notions

Oona's mother's first words, "‘You are so beautiful,’ her mother said as she was leaving, ‘you should get a gun,’" (Hamid, 2022, p. 23) reflect her fear and prejudice against people of color. She divides people into "our people" (Hamid, 2022, p. 22-23), excluding those who are not white. Her daughter's beauty, linked to her whiteness, needs protection from perceived threats posed by people of color, revealing a belief that they are inherently dangerous.

Symbolism of the Daughter

Oona's mother sees her daughter as the future of white civilization. She fears the demographic shift towards a majority of people of color will threaten white dominance and prosperity. Oona represents the potential for a bright future due to her education and upbringing, while people of color are seen as incapable of sustaining progress. This reflects a view of whiteness as synonymous with civilization and progress, while brownness signifies decline.

Metaphorical Language

The metaphor of people of color as lizards in a desert underscores their perceived insignificance and backwardness. In contrast, white people are likened to fertile fields, symbolizing growth and prosperity. This reinforces the belief in white supremacy and the idea that the future is secure only in the hands of white people.

Denial of Violence and Hypocrisy

Oona's mother denies the violence against people of color, attributing it to "paid aggressors" (Hamid, 2022, p. 67). This mirrors how some white Americans refuse to acknowledge systemic racism, instead portraying themselves as victims. This hypocritical stance allows them to maintain a facade of inclusivity while perpetuating racial discrimination.

Media and Perceived Betrayal

When media personalities she once admired change color, Oona's mother feels betrayed, reflecting her deep-seated racism. Her discomfort with these changes mirrors how white audiences often devalue contributions from people of color, as highlighted by Zulfikar Ghose's experiences in literary circles.

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Interracial Intimacy and Intense Racism

Oona's mother's reaction to her daughter's relationship with Anders, a person of color, is visceral. She vomits, unable to accept this breach of racial boundaries. This reaction epitomizes the extreme measures white individuals might take to maintain racial segregation and supremacy.

Transition and Acceptance

As the town transitions to a majority of people of color, even Oona's mother eventually changes. Despite her initial dread, she comes to accept the new reality, symbolizing a reluctant but inevitable shift towards racial harmony.

Critical Race Theory and Counter-Storytelling

Hamid's narrative transitions from autumn to spring, symbolizing the journey from racial hostility to harmony. Counter-storytelling in Critical Race Theory gives voice to marginalized people and envisions a future of inclusivity. By the novel's end, even Oona's mother accepts Anders, symbolizing the possibility of overcoming deep-seated prejudices.

A Hopeful Future

The reconciliation of Anders, Oona, and her mother suggests a potential for racial harmony. Hamid's vision aligns with Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream of a world where all are considered equal, advocating for acceptance and understanding beyond racial biases. This transformation underscores the novel's hopeful message that a more inclusive and harmonious future is possible.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have delved into the complexities of *The Last White Man*, to uncover the profound aspects of psychological and physical impacts of racism on people of color in the West. I have used Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic's Critical Race Theory as a framework in which everyday racism and counter story-telling were my two guiding principles. The study findings contributed to the broad domain of African American and South Asian American (desi) Studies. The narrative revolves around the wicked practice of racialization, which is the main determiner of this study. Critical Race Theory is a counter attack on the liberal notions of modern day inclusion and diversity, who claimed that racism has become as archaic phenomenon, a matter of the past. White Americans has built this notion upon the

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representation of colored artists in the Hollywood and mass media, abolishment of lynching, assassination and target killing of colored leaders in their political campaigns, legislative reforms to make racial discrimination illegal, excess of non-white races to global academic scholarship, and freedom to shop, dine, hang out, travel and make association as they well. On the other hand, Critical Race Theorists believe that racism have taken a new form. Though physical violence has disappeared, but the white men behave in a certain way to maintain his hegemony, which compels the colored person to feel low and recessive in front of them, resulting in an inferiority complex.

Hamid has unfolded the poor status of a dark person in the U.S. through the narrative of Anders. He has undergone a sudden racial transition and has become brown. His perception of brownness has reflected the image and status of a dark person in the eyes of a white man. Who out of their innate biasness, prejudice and stereotypes considered the dark persons ugly, unbearable, some alien sea creatures, a subject of anger and physical violence, a shame for social appearance and public gathering, some monstrous barbaric beings, worthy of ghettos in the remote, and not fit in the hustle of the town. Thieves who have robbed their white men's freedom and hegemony, due to the rapid racial transition. Oona's mother's remarks have also highlighted the inferior status of a dark person. She truly resembled a radical racist figure. Who considered white people as "our" and the dark as "others". The former has the potential to lead the generation, in their hands the future is safe and brighter. Oona her daughter, being a youthful charming girl is the glorious star of tomorrow, beautiful, well-mannered, and noble. On the contrary, the others are barbaric, savages, ill-mannered, and ignoble. Like their skin tone the West believed that their conduct would also be dark. As the transition has engulfed the whole town, the white supremacists feared the rise of the marginalized group to position of power. People of color are considered incapable of good governance and their rise is associated with downfall of the nation.

Every day racism is the habitual struggle of colored person on account of their skin tone in the U.S. Enders has confronted profound racial micro-aggression, which has depicted the troubles of dark people in the West. They have confronted psychological assault, contact avoidance, derogatory comments and jokes at public spheres, unusual interruption, and talking over at the traffic signals and at work places. This day-to-day soft humiliation (because there is no physical involvement), has not confined to the strangers, even in antra family relationships, the dark people have suffered, either the white parents do not approve their children's relation with dark persons, or in unfamiliar situation like our study object, the

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victims were not heartedly embraced. Anders's father and Oona, his girlfriend shocked at his first glimpse, after his transition. His father didn't manage to hide the frowns on his forehead. Similarly, Oona's mother couldn't control herself and vomited on the floor when she saw her white daughter with dark Anders in her bed. This study has also investigated the new and hypocrite forms of physical racism. Though, the legal codes are color blind, but the executive machinery is mostly white, who not just baked the violence, but also served as silent spectators and disapproved violence in the town.

Since both forms of racism are interconnected and the exercise of one form has effected the other aspect of a victim's personality. Anders has confronted both physical and psychological racism, which has profoundly effected his personality. He has inhabited a sense of paranoia, on account of the excessive and irrational suspiciousness and distrustfulness by his white counterparts. He has loosed confidence and self-esteemed, both in private and professional life. Anders has felt reluctant in his interaction with Oona, his father and his favorite clients at the gym, who have immense affection with him on account of their shared agility and strong bodies. He has doubted his professional potentials and felt low in the presence of his white boss, even both of them were skeptical about the pre and post transition strength of his weight pulling. He has developed heightened sensitivity, a sense of alienation, subjugation, isolation, and racial trauma.

Western democracies have crafted beautiful slogans of inclusion, diversity, equality, freedom and liberty. These beautiful manifestations are mean to be obeyed by the under developed and poor Asian states. America being super power has engaged the world in the chase of such gay painted slogan. But in reality, it has failed to implement such standard on its own soil, because of the white men's interest. Colored American of Mexican(Latino), African, and Asian origin are subject to psychological and non-conventional physical racism, which have made their lives difficult and challenging. Hamid being a colored author has advocated the creation of an ideal world. The narrative ended in spring, showcasing Anders and Oona being transformed with their dark daughter in one frame. Despite their white ancestors they jell-well together as a happy family. He has idealized that if the white persons set aside their self-created hegemony and start behaving in an impartial way the world would become a better place to live.

This study is limited to the evaluation of everyday racism and counter storytelling as the tenets of the Critical Race theory, due to the limited time frame, inadequate resources and

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workload. Future research could further explore the applicability of material determinism and differential racialization as early guiding principles of CRT. Since CRT has evolved rapidly, not just the concerned theorist, but also other scholars in the discipline have suggested new determiners of racism which can be utilized in further investigation of the study object. Edwards Said's *Orientalism*, and *Bhabba's* concept of mimicry are some of the other potential avenues of exploration.

Before embarking on this enlightening journey of exploration, I lacked understanding of the psychological aspects of racism and its devastating impacts on people of color. Through this endeavor, I have gained insights into the harmful effects of derogatory remarks, gossip, staring, eye-rolling, strange gazes, and shocking glances on individual of diverse background. In the future, I commit to refrain from such behaviors not only towards people of color but also towards individuals with disabilities and foreigners, promoting inclusivity and respect for all. Similarly, through this study I have learnt the art of conduct in a heterogeneous environment, which will help me during my higher studies in the West.

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