



POST-HUMAN SUBJECTIVITY AND THE DISSOLUTION OF FIXED IDENTITIES IN MOHSIN HAMID'S *THE LAST WHITE MAN*

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Abstract

Mohsin Hamid's (2022) novel, *The Last White Man* converts racial transformation into a test case for the instability of the human subject and subjectivity. While the novel has been read primarily as a fable of whiteness, racial anxiety, and social panic, this article argues that its deeper intervention lies in its post-human reconfiguration of identity as embodied, relational, and mutable. Drawing on Rosi Braidotti's (2013) views on post-human subjectivity and Cary Wolfe's (2010) critique of human exceptionalism, with support from critical race theory and new materialist thought, the article employs close textual analysis to examine Anders's metamorphosis, Oona's relational becoming, the father's dying body, and the community's collapse of racial certainty. The argument shows that Hamid does not imagine transformation as liberation from race but as exposure of the racialized humanist order. In this way, the novel reimagines humanity not as essence or possession, but as a shared condition of vulnerable becoming.

Keywords: *Dissolution, Identity, Post-humanism, Racism, Subjectivity.*

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1. Introduction

Hamid's (2022) *The Last White Man* starts with what seems like a straightforward speculative disruption. As portrayed, Anders, a white man, awakens to find that his skin has turned black. There is no any scientific, religious, pathological, conspiratorial, or magical explanation for this occurrence. Hamid resists the usual framework of explanation that grounds the speculative genre. This alteration has no cause, no remedy, no rule, and no observable agent. The power of this narrative is located elsewhere. By making the individual's race mutable while still retaining biological consistency, the novel destabilizes the idea of identity as either inner essence or outer label. This contradiction is the vital mechanism of the novel. It is also what differentiates the novel from just being a story of a disguise. The altered body does not cover up any true identity within it but demonstrates that the previous one was maintained by physical and social conditions all along. The text immediately identifies the incident as a perceptual disruption when Anders attempts to dismiss it as "a trick too, an optical illusion" (Hamid, 2022, p. 1).

Noticeably, one of the tones that is central to this literary work is race. *The Last White Man* presents whiteness as a precarious social formation, and not something natural, and captures the panic triggered by losing the illusion of permanence associated with whiteness. However, an analysis confined to such a concept of racial constructivism would neglect the most radical element within the novel. Through his fiction, Hamid(2022) is not only conveying the idea of racial constructs but also demonstrating that even the human identity has historically been constructed on the basis of racial visibility. The altered body is not just a symbol, while the person remains intact. On the contrary, the body provides the context where the notion of personhood is negotiated and challenged. It is in this sense that Anders' body "looked for the whiteness there and didn't find it," (Hamid, 2022, p. 3).

This portrayal makes an attempt to demonstrate that *The Last White Man* should be considered a post-humanist novel of racial becoming. The post-humanism of the novel does not concern artificial intelligence, cybernetics, animalism, or advanced technologies. Instead, this text contributes to critical post-humanism because it destroys the myth of liberal humanist subject as an autonomous, continuous, self-owned entity that is supposed to be separated from social inscription. As Rosi Braidotti (2013) defines her post-human subject, it is neither an independent individual, nor a body, but an entity constituted by embodied relations and force. While Cary Wolfe (2010) argues that the post-humanism does not get rid of the human, but refuses to accept humanist belief in human autonomy.

For Anders, Anders's physical change represents more than just a racial flip. Anders's changed skin highlights the reliance of one's identity upon being recognized. In his father's dying body, the novel opens up from race to life, death, caring, and unmaking bodies. In Oona's metamorphosis, subjectivity is shown as relational, not private. In the panic of the larger town, the novel demonstrates that racial identity is not merely a problem

of individual racism but also an infrastructure of orientation. What makes Hamid's novel so powerful is his refusal of both liberal comfort and naïve post-race fantasies. Race does not vanish when everyone changes in this novel. Rather, race, whiteness, maleness, sorrow, terror, and love are all methods for organizing the body as a human. When the meaning is unraveled, what remains is not pure humanity but rather a harder process of becoming.

1.1. Research Questions

1. How does *The Last White Man* destabilize fixed racial identity through the bodily transformation of Anders and the wider community?
2. How does Hamid's novel construct post-human subjectivity through relationality, embodiment, vulnerability, and change?
3. What does a post-humanist reading reveal about the novel's critique of humanist assumptions surrounding race, whiteness, and the category of the human?

2. Literature Review

One of the most significant theoretical discourses that have arisen within contemporary humanities literature about contemporary Anglophone fiction concerned with race, migration, and national identity is post-humanism, since contemporary anglophone fiction concerned with these topics has been shifting towards speculative and semi-speculative fiction as tools to examine identity in terms of its contingency rather than inheritance. Critical whiteness studies has provided an especially powerful language for analyzing racial anxieties in recent fiction.

Murray (2026) constructs a concept of what she calls melancholic whiteness, where she explores whiteness not only as something that is tied to skin color but rather as an affective and political affiliation which reacts to feelings of loss using demographic anxiety, replacement fear, and dystopian imagination. This framework proves helpful since it helps us understand that racial anxiety does not always constitute an understandable reaction to material threat but rather it is a specific ideological formation with its own history and logic. Furthermore, the framework offered by Murray points towards the possibility of a post-racial narrative horizon without being too optimistic about this possibility.

The present research draws on this understanding but shifts its focus. In a critical whiteness framework, the question asked is that of what occurs once whiteness is stripped away; in a post-humanist framework, the question asked is rather that of what kind of human was being privileged by whiteness all along, and why the loss of racial privilege could generate such intense ontological fear even for subjects that continue to live, speak, work, love, and socialize. This fear cannot be reduced to questions of appearance; it is part of a longer history where whiteness has always functioned as a promise of security, knowledge, and certainty.

This focus on the affective nature of racial anxiety is part of a larger concern within postcolonial scholarship about the existential nature of waiting, movement, and arrival. Lagji (2019) claims that postcolonial literature has begun to show how waiting, arrival, and movement are not simply geographical acts but are existential experiences that structure the formation of subjectivity. This idea can help us better understand stories wherein characters do not journey from one political space to another but remain in the same spot while their bodies become more visible, more threatening, and more uncertain. In such stories, race does not become something that is put upon the body after the fact but instead becomes the system that structures the body. In other words, the border moves across the body rather than over the landscape. The vast histories of race, migration, and fear can therefore be read through personal and bodily experience rather than broad historical description, making the private body into the space through which the larger world can suddenly become visible.

The idea of this problem relates to a larger body of thought within race theory. According to Omi & Winant (2015), the definition of race involves a socio-historical process by which bodies, institutions, and meanings become organized. This theory of racial formation becomes integral in understanding the way that a change in physical appearance can compel every institution to reveal its racial biases.

Alcoff (2006) equally argues that visible identities cannot simply be reduced to illusions. While race is socially constructed, it does not exist without social weight. It is perceived, experienced, anticipated, and performed. This contradiction lies at the heart of all theories of racial visibility, since race exists in no biological sense, while racial visibility transforms the entire sphere of social recognition. The terror caused by being racially exposed is not in being different from oneself but in having the world see oneself through different optics.

The notion of racialization developed by Fanon is crucial in this context. According to Franz Fanon (1952), in his groundbreaking work, *Black Skin, White Masks*, racial identity has been formed in such a way that a violent separation occurs between self and object within the subject. This theory explains another important aspect related to whiteness, as whiteness used to be a kind of racial unmarking which means the absence of necessity to recognize oneself as being part of certain racial category. The collapse of this racial unmarking, whatever its cause, results in catastrophe, as whiteness enabled people to consider social ease for being self-nature.

Du Bois's (2007) discussion of double consciousness makes this observation even more precise by describing the psychological divide created when one's self-perception is dependent on an antagonistic outside perception, and why suddenly having one's race made visible where before there was no marker at all would be an identity crisis of profound magnitude.

This is where post-humanism is required. The classical liberal humanism posits the idea of the subject as being interior, rational, self-same, and detached from the body. The critical post-humanism critiques this very subject not through praising dehumanization but through proving that humans have always been vulnerable, relational, and unevenly distributed. According to Hayles (1999), the concept of the post-human cannot be discussed without the reference to the idea of embodiment since the concept of information is not possible in terms of disembodiment.

Haraway's (1991) cyborg, for example, is used to disrupt the distinctions between organism and machine, nature and culture, human and non-human, by adopting an attitude that is inherently suspicious of any notion of pure origins and essentialized identities which have come to form part of post-humanist methodology. The body in-between organic/mechanical or racially legible/illegible for Haraway is a place where materiality and meaning cannot be separated.

Rosi Braidotti's (2013) theory is particularly helpful because it understands the post-human subject as a process rather than as a being whose essence is defined in certain ways. As she sees it, the crisis of humanism offers an opportunity to create affirmative types of subjectivity through relations, multiplicity, and accountability. The affirmative aspect of such an approach does not imply any need for purity or moral impeccability of the subject because it becomes more able to relate and love not due to any ideal condition reached but simply because its previous dream of separation and independence is destroyed. The theory is especially relevant for stories where transformation is not limited to just one person alone.

Wolfe's (2010) critique clarifies this by making the distinction between post-humanism and antihumanism clear as following, "post-humanism is not a rejection of the human." Post-humanism implies that the traditional philosophical figure of the human does not hold any longer the status of the undiscussable central concept. The notion of the human has always been constructed by excluding other people from the category of full humanity, as suggested by Wynter (2003), Weheliye (2014), and later by Jackson (2020). Wynter states that in the Western world, modernity has overly represented the genre of Man, presenting it as the human itself. Weheliye proves that racializing assemblages divide populations into the categories of full humans, not-quite-humans, and nonhumans. Jackson illustrates the fact that post-human theorizing is incapable of disregarding the fact that black people have already been forced to live in the state of proximity to animality, matter, and the nonhuman. Therefore, any post-humanist interpretation of racial change as a purely philosophical and metaphorical occurrence is impossible.

Butler's (1993) concept of materialization sheds light on this method of analysis as well. It is not the case that bodies exist in themselves as neutral matter before being endowed with meaning; it is power that determines which bodies are rendered

intelligible, dangerous, desirable, or grievable. Another way of understanding this approach can be found in Sara Ahmed's (2006) book, *Queer phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. The world is structured in such a way that certain bodies move through it easily, whereas others face resistance. Thus, whiteness should be understood as an orientation in the world rather than merely a visible trait of bodies: it is an orientation that makes one able to navigate through streets, workspaces, and kinship relations without registering the world as racialized. If this orientation gets disturbed, nothing has objectively changed in the world but only in the relationship between bodies and this world, as one confronts the same world in a different manner.

The connection between the concepts of embodiment and technology in terms of post-humanist theory requires more attention since it explains why bodily transformation and not technological alteration becomes possible as a form of post-humanist critique. Indeed, early representations of the post-human in popular media were characterized by the prevalence of technological transformation of the subject into the cyborg free from biological restrictions through prosthetic devices, artificial intelligence or digital consciousness. The significance of Hayles' (1999) criticism consisted precisely in her attempt to refute this technological supremacy, arguing that even technologically mediated identities cannot escape embodiment and are materialized and limited in their nature. This point becomes relevant for interpretation of the story where no technological device serves to transform the character. In case when the post-humanist condition is defined not by technological advancement but by embodiment, finiteness and relationality, a narrative of bodily change without any explanation of the technological device becomes possible as a post-humanist text because of its focus on the problem of instability of embodied identity.

In this way, this point relates very directly to issues surrounding genre and narrative technique. For speculative fiction, it has been common practice for explanatory elements to have been used whether science, magic, or technology – in order to provide stability for the idea of transformation, while at the same time reassuring the reader that there is rational logic behind it. A story which does not use this type of explanation brings about a kind of destabilization which cannot be contained within an established generic structure, thereby forcing the transformation to be understood as a confrontation with the category of humanity itself. In this way, it works very closely with Wolfe's (2010) emphasis on the fact that post-humanism is not something which is related to genre but to a method of criticism; there need not be robots, artificial intelligence, or biotechnology for a piece of writing to be post-humanist in nature.

The problem of affect and panic requires additional theoretical justification as well, since reactions to racial destabilization are not just ideological or cognitive; rather, they are visceral and bodily, and often out of proportion to any present danger. The relevance of Ahmed's (2004) wider study of the cultural politics of emotions can be observed in this

case, where she develops the notion of a phenomenological orientation and applies it to the analysis of emotions which travel between people and things and take their political and historical meanings in the process. In such a way, fear is not just an individual mental experience but a social technique which unites people as dangerous and those who need protection from them. Thus, the described approach explains why the communities which face the problem of racial destabilization tend to react with fear, suspicion, and violence which are sometimes exaggerated with regard to any present danger, as the fear does not derive from changed bodies, but rather from disintegrated perceptual and emotional structure.

Melancholia provides an additional theoretical concept for the analysis of these dynamics, extending the framework provided by Murray (2026). The psychoanalytical notion of melancholia, where the lost object is neither mourned nor let go, but rather retained in identification with the individual, has been creatively utilized by critical race scholars in their description of the failure of dominant groups to abandon their racial privileges when such privileges have become historically obsolete. The difference between melancholia and mourning lies in the fact that the latter allows for recognition of the loss and a reconceptualization of the self under changed circumstances. A society that experiences a melancholic attachment to the racial hierarchy would react to the undermining of this hierarchy not with adjustment, but rather with ever greater levels of denial, fury, and violence since such a loss cannot be accepted within the realm of a sustainable narrative of change.

One additional stream of scholarship relevant to this research project is concerned with the interrelationship of kinship, care, and embodiment amid bodily instability. Feminist theories of the body have pointed out that vulnerability and the necessity for care are inherent aspects of humanity, not its exceptions since the beginning of time. This observation raises serious questions about the autonomy of the humanist subject; it appears that the illusion of independence and self-sufficiency presupposes denial of all kinds of relations and dependencies that enable human existence throughout life and after its completion. In cases when the bodily change is associated with illness, aging, or even death in the context of familial structure, racial and mortality bodily instabilities are able to shed light on each other, since they draw attention to the fact that the human body is not a constant possession but a temporary, vulnerable, and relational configuration.

The other major area where this scholarship has overlap with the work of historians is the history of the production of racialized embodiment via specific acts of institutionalized violence, rather than cultural attitudes alone. The concepts by Spillers (1987) in tracing the historical grammar created by the act of slavery show us how some bodies were stripped off their personhood and left only as flesh, and how kinship relations, gender relations, and selfhood itself was violently rewritten in a situation of slavery. This

difference between body and flesh is crucial for understanding the genealogy of contemporary debates about racialized embodiment, because the instability of race as a concept that post-humanist criticism points out is historically based and violent. Mbembe's (2003) notion of Necropolitics goes further in the sense that he articulates the organization of racially ordered societies not only in terms of the allocation of recognition and rights but also in terms of allocation of exposure to death. The articulation of sovereignty as the capacity to decide upon who lives and dies is an important framework through which to understand why communities react to perceived threats to their racial order with increased vigilance, violence, and a suspension of normal social rules through the memory of history of racialized violence that surpasses any immediate threat. All these frameworks compel us to realize that any post-humanist understanding of race is not sufficient without taking into consideration its historical and political contexts.

There is, thus, a considerable gap in the literature. While there is a great deal of work exploring the socio-political aspects of racial insecurity in relation to race, migration and postcolonial identity studies; and while there is a great deal of critique from a post-human perspective of the autonomous and special nature of the human subject, there has been very little discussion of the possibility of narratives of racial transformation linking the two debates by viewing racial instability as a crisis of the human subject rather than merely a social problem which can be overcome by legislation or changed attitudes alone. It would be particularly productive, in this context, if the crisis of the human were identified as arising not in spectacular technologies, but in the everyday act of looking at a body and making a decision about what sort of person it is allowed to be.

3. Theoretical Framework

Concepts of post-humanism forms the main theoretical lens used in this research. This theory is based mostly on Braidotti (2013) and Wolfe (2010), but they are considered within the context of race theory. According to Braidotti (2013), post-human subject appears following the fall of universal humanist subject – an image that has always been represented by white, male, European, rational and sovereign person. Post-humanism is not about the escape from embodiment. It is an analysis of embodied, embedded and relational subjectivity. As Braidotti (2013) says, the post-human subject “is a relational subject constituted in and by multiplicity” (p.71).

Such an approach allows us to read Hamid's bodies in transformation as process and not as a symbol of fixed racial replacement. A body transformed is neither an essence nor a mere costume over a consistent internal self. It is a mutable node within a social field in which meaning, affect, and matter continuously affect one another. As such, this conceptual framework is founded on a transformed body that is, however, "not a separate person" (Hamid, 2022, p. 1).

According to Wolfe (2010), this paradigm can be further complicated by a critical approach to any easy embrace of post-humanity as technology that upgrades or transcends humanity. According to Wolfe (2010), post-humanism is “thinking after humanism,” that is, thinking after the philosophical framework that positioned the human as the measure of all values, yet excluded anyone that did not meet its standards. As Wolfe (2010) suggests, post-humanism is “leaving humanism behind, not the human in all its embodied and prosthetic complexity.” Such an interpretation is relevant to *The Last White Man* since Hamid does not describe a world beyond human vulnerability and an extraordinary being that transcends the limits of ordinary humans. Instead, he describes the world in which the myth of the unchanging human identity falls apart.

Nevertheless, a racialized perspective on post-humanism is necessary for it not to reproduce exclusions it challenges. According to Wynter (2003), the category of Man has been excessively present as the human in itself. Weheliye (2014) claims that racialization works by means of assemblages distributing differential access to humanity. Finally, Jackson (2020) insists that the issue of matter, animality, and embodiment within post-humanism should take into account the anti-Black past denying full humanity to racialized bodies. All these make it impossible for the article to perceive transformations introduced by Hamid as philosophical changes only. The transformed body in the novel is politically loaded due to the fact that the body is one of the ways of granting or withholding humanity.

The methodology of the article consists of close textual analysis. The study deals with the form of narration, characters, body description, affect, setting, and relational moments instead of viewing the novel through the prism of an allegory of some theory. This analysis is centered on Anders, Oona, Anders’s father, Oona’s mother, and the unnamed community as these individuals are the embodiments of different aspects of the post-human subjectivity – shock, desire, care, conspiracy, violence, loss, adaptation, and recognition. The purpose of this study is not to claim that Hamid presents the full political plan of racial justice. Instead, the article will prove that Hamid’s novel shows the fragility of the humanist subject.

4. Textual Analysis

As Hamid depicts, in the case of Anders, the initial change is the most powerful event of the novel, yet the author describes it with remarkable restraint. Anders wakes up, sees himself in the mirror, and realizes that his body has turned into something racially indeterminate for him. The scene with the mirror is so important because it presents identity as a process that occurs between the body, its image, and recognition. The mirror is not just a reflection of the transformed body, it is the crisis of the relationship between the subject and the visual manifestation of his body through which he used to move around in the world. The body of Anders did not turn into something inhuman, yet from the reaction of Anders we understand that the sense of being a human had been determined by

racial constancy. It is not only the color of the skin that shocked him. What really shocked him was the fact that his body, which he considered to be a permanent manifestation of his personality, turned out to be unstable.

The situation at hand can be described as post-human according to Braidotti (2013) as it challenges the idea of the coherent and self-owned individual. Anders had always seen himself as a continuation of himself because that is what was reinforced by his social environment. Being white served as an invisible technology of recognizing oneself. He was able to see himself and his body as ordinary. This ordinariness no longer being present makes it clear that the liberal humanist subject was not a universal idea, but something achieved through social repetition. He still has consciousness, memory, language, and desires. What is taken away from him is the assurance that the body will continue protecting the story he tells himself.

It is important to note how Hamid uses the sparse expression “deep and undeniable brown” to describe the new skin since the expression has both the power of sensory concreteness and epistemology (Hamid, 2022, p. 1). The difference becomes undeniable in that the body now intrudes into the act of denial. However, the novel does not provide the darkness with any clear ethnic, national, or historical markers. Such ambiguity in the text has been viewed as a weakness in the novel. However, such ambiguity carries out a particular attack on whiteness. The panic in the town is not due to the emergence of another that can be clearly defined. It is due to the loss of the category that enabled the white to imagine itself as unmarked.

The mirror scene also alludes to Fanon’s theory of racial objectivation, but Hamid’s twist needs to be treated very delicately. Anders does not get a history of the colonized immediately upon reflection in the mirror. He did not inherit the history of slavery, colonialism, segregation, migrations, or anti-Black violence. He did not have an easy transition to the experience of racialized subjects. He simply discovered the deficiency of his prior understanding of self. He assumed individuality on the basis of unmarked racial identity. While Fanon provides insight into the power of the gaze, Hamid demonstrates what could happen to a subject who has enjoyed the privilege of being the default subject under the influence of the gaze.

The early scenes of concealing oneself are as significant. Anders hides, shirks work, and tries to negotiate visibility. His normal activities turn strategic. This serves to reinforce Ahmed’s assertion that some social worlds are attuned to certain bodies better than others. Prior to the metamorphosis, the gym, street, shop, and place of work extend the same level of comfort that Anders enjoys. Post-metamorphosis, they turn into spaces of calculations. The physical environment remains the same, but everything changes because Anders’ relationship with the environment changes. The key insight provided by Hamid is that privilege is more than being on the receiving end of external benefits; rather,

it is a bodily condition where one moves effortlessly without having to think of how he/she moves. The isolation experienced by Anders is well-captured by the claustrophobic phrase that "there was no escaping Anders, for Anders, that day" (p.13).

The new attitude has also brought about a reconceptualization of masculinity. Anders is connected to the gym, physical fitness, masculinity, and certain minimal emotional language. His body is something that Anders has managed to master. Racial transformation has become an ironic comment on that mastery. Nothing will bring back the identity that Anders believed his body would ensure. Butler's theory of materialization helps to understand why this body is not just biological material but a body that makes sense according to the norms of race, gender, fitness, and masculine independence. Transformation does not separate him from the body; it exposes him to the body too much. Anders realizes that the body is not something personal but something public where the power looks at him. Gym scenes show how trying to be oneself becomes the most artificial activity possible.

The response of Oona introduces an element into the narrative that makes it difficult because her attraction, curiosity, hesitation, and then change are all elements that indicate how identity is constructed through others. Initially, Anders tells Oona because the intimacy of their situation appears to offer a shelter from any kind of social criticism. However, the novel does not allow intimacy to stay away from politics. Oona sees Anders as something different; Anders sees himself being seen differently; his sexual desire is affected by racial difference even though he still loves Oona. The love story becomes a small experiment of post-human subjectivity where neither one of them is a stable individual with clear identity before entering into a relationship.

The transformation of Oona is not a mere repetition of Anders's case, thus making the novel not a case of isolated transformation but rather a story of mutual becoming. In other words, if only Anders transformed, the novel could have become a story about exceptional victimhood. However, since Oona transforms, the transformation becomes both relational and contagious, although not in the medical sense but in the ontological sense. Here, human identity becomes a matter of process, which is distributed throughout multiple bodies. In this regard, the framework provided by Braidotti (2013) fits perfectly well.

Oona does not simply fall into the same category with Anders. Rather, their relationship is reworked because of the fact that sameness and difference no longer depend on the old racial geography. It is worth noting the way Oona comes back in the novel using the phrase "the dark man who had been Anders" (Hamid, 2022, p. 14). A further embodiment that comes out of the novel's portrayal of Oona's mother is that of media saturation, conspiracy theories, and affective capture. Here, the mother reacts to social change through fear narratives. She lives in a mediated reality of screens, hearsay, and

ideology reinforcement. Hamid doesn't have to explain in depth because this cycle is obvious: racial ambiguity feeds into reactionary fantasy. With this figure, the post-human is not automatically emancipatory. The human is always technologically connected but technology can foster fear as much as collaboration. The work of Haraway is useful here as her emphasis on the absence of clear boundaries provides perspective on this aspect of the novel. Bodies are embedded in technology, narratives, and politics. This means not whether humans are technologically connected but how this technology makes people afraid or accountable. Fear is introduced in the novel when the mother simply utters "people are changing" (Hamid, 2022, p. 6). The mother of Oona holds on to her whiteness as an inheritance, but inheritance in this book is problematic. There is no way of transmission of identity from one generation to the other within this family. What this family transfers is grief, fear, loneliness, political vulnerability, and need for explanation. One can see how the death of Oona's brother plays out in this case. This death is something that goes beyond the narrative of racial transformation in the novel; it adds a lot more depth to it. Oona and her mother exist in the shadow of absence even before the transformation of their skin takes place.

This transition is emphasized further by the father of Anders. Whereas his skin changes due to his racial transformation, the father becomes ill, which represents a different type of physical change. Although his body does not experience racial transformation, his body is breaking down with age and sickness. Thus, the presence of two types of physical changes allows for the novel to avoid becoming a simple allegory, where the meaning of the story was solely carried by the color of skin. The father's condition serves as a reminder that the body of every human being is transient, dependent, and fragile. This is important because Wolfe's (2010) critique of humanism is applicable here. The humanist subject understands itself through its autonomy, while human existence is characterized by dependence, weakness, and the body's resistance to domination. For Anders's father, racial transformation also makes him forget his mother, as "his mother had vanished" (Hamid, 2022, p. 9).

Anders' interactions with his father are among the most compelling aspects of the novel due to the presence of both the racial estrangement and the familial closeness. In this scene, the father has to contend both with Anders' change in appearance and with his impending death. Both of these factors alter the notion of recognition: to recognize Anders for who he once was is to ignore the reality of the current situation, whereas recognizing Anders solely for his strangeness is to ignore their relationship. Hamid asks how love can endure when vision fails, but the answer is not a sentimental one: love endures insofar as it changes its means of recognition.

The change in the recognition process is post-human because it disrupts the connection between identity and ownership. Anders cannot own his previous appearance;

his father cannot own his previous strength; Oona cannot own her family; and the town cannot own whiteness as a social reality. The novel repeatedly takes away from its characters what they once thought belonged to them naturally. Dispossession is experienced differently by each individual. This is crucial. For those who have historically been racialized, dispossession is forced upon them by violence. For the white characters in Hamid's town, dispossession means the dispossession of domination, comfort, and normalcy.

This is further reinforced by the setting, which remains nameless in the novel. The unnamed town is immediately familiar yet geographically unidentifiable. It can be seen as being American, British, European, or Western in general. The absence of specificity serves a political purpose. It denies readers the opportunity to think of racial panic as someone else's issue. The town is constructed as a structure of feeling rather than a sociological phenomenon. Streets, houses, places of work, and stores have an ordinary existence that implies that racial order is inherent in everyday life. The extraordinary occurrence is simply meant to reveal it.

The phenomenon of social violence arrives in the novel as the communal version of Anders's individual anxiety. With increasing numbers transforming into vampires, rumors circulate, armed bands emerge, and life becomes unpredictable. The anxiety is not simply anxiety about the dark body but anxiety about the ordering of the hierarchy based on whiteness that is threatened. While Mbembe's concept of necropolitics helps interpret the environment of danger in the novel, Hamid's novel is not an illustration of a developed sovereign apparatus of killing. What is demonstrated in the novel is how ordinary communities can adopt the necropolitical mood and make decisions about dangerous bodies, about what losses are important, what futures need to be secured, and which lives are open to violence.

This is when Weheliye's notion of racializing assemblages is particularly insightful. There is no racism present in one single character's mind. Racism occurs through the assembly of mirrors, glances, places of employment, family, media networks, streets, gossip, guns, and memories. The elements listed above assemble flesh into categories of threat and inclusion. Transformation crisis shows that race is not biologically and ideologically determined alone but represents an assembly of flesh, affect, institution, and perception. The change in Anders' flesh acquires meaning once it is placed into the assemblage where blackened skin is read as threat, loss, substitution, or contamination.

On the other hand, Hamid's novel not only exposes racism but also examines what happens beyond the exposure. With the spread of change, whiteness no longer retains its power to structure the visual field. On the surface, this seems to confirm the idea of a post-racial utopia because, if everybody transforms, race vanishes. However, the novel does not present things so clearly. The vanishing of whiteness does not mean that there is a fix for

history; neither does it mean that the distribution of wealth or any kind of healing process will occur due to it. All it means is that the perceptual order which makes whiteness so natural is disrupted.

It is important to note the critique of post-humanism put forward by Jackson at this juncture. The easy way out would be to see the world created by this novel as one beyond race, with the blackening of bodies signifying a freeing from the racial distinction inherent in being human. In his critique, Jackson raises concerns about post-humanisms that make use of Blackness or a racial body as an easy metaphor for fluidity without taking into consideration the legacy of dehumanization of Black bodies. There is a possibility of this occurring in Hamid's novel since his dark-skinned characters used to be white people before their transformation.

This limitation gains its theoretical significance through Wynter's analysis of overrepresentation of Man. *The Last White Man* is a novel that speaks of the failure of a particular genre of the human being: namely, a white Western masculine body that could represent humankind silently. Through Anders' name, body, practices and social status, one locates him close to such an image. With his metamorphosis comes the fall of not of the human race but of a symbolic construction where his body was accepted as default. This is made evident by Hamid's choice of the title. There is more to *The Last White Man* than just the last person with a pale skin.

That unwillingness to convert to morality instantly is one of the merits of the novel. Anders undergoes transformation in an inconsistent manner. He still feels fear, shies away from things and people, can be gentle and selfish at once. The post-human subject is not the purified subject. Braidotti's (2013) positive ethics might appear more dogmatic in comparison to Hamid's novel. Hamid's fictional universe implies that transformation is morally dangerous. The dissolution of the rigid sense of self could open up new possibilities for relation, but it could also make everything more violent. Before her acceptance, Oona's mother turns paranoid. Before becoming livable, the town turns out to be more dangerous.

Grief adds a deep emotional layer to the instability of becoming that characterizes the novel. The processes of racial becoming and grief do not constitute separate stories. Both are tied to the need to continue living after the loss of a certain recognizable form. Grieving the death of her brother, Oona laments; Anders anticipates the death and laments the loss of his father; the town laments the loss of its whiteness; and Oona's mother laments her imaginary world order. These are not equal forms of grief, but they resonate. Using the theme of grief, Hamid shows that identity and hope for the future are tied to loss and to the interpretation of it.

Murray's concept of melancholic whiteness works well, but post-humanism takes the argument one step further. The issue is not just that whiteness will not grieve its loss.

The issue is that whiteness assumes that it is ontologically stable. It thinks that losing whiteness would mean the loss of humanity as opposed to losing a violently organized privilege structure. This is what Hamid's book shows when he allows people to continue surviving the loss of whiteness. They don't lose their capacity to love, work, grieve, touch or remember. What is lost is the notion that humanity needed whiteness as a stable ground beneath it. The romance between Oona and Anders provides the most sustained alternative to this fantasy. It is an intimate connection which is flawed, incomplete, and at times unclear, but it represents an attempt to hold on to change. They do not figure out what the political implications of transformation can be by way of theory. Instead, they gradually learn how to exist within transformed bodies. This is not a turning away from politics to find a romance, but rather a proof that political categories come into play even in the smallest moments of touch.

The funeral of the father and the subsequent trajectory of transformation into collectivity tie these elements together. Both death and racial transformation become two examples of irrevocable change. The white body that was once so important to the community becomes temporal, historical, and ultimately absent. Hamid does not portray this absence as an apocalyptic end. Life goes on. This very continuation is the novel's most radical yet subtle statement. The fact that the world is capable of going on even when the power of whiteness vanishes proves that whiteness was neither the equivalent of civilization nor humanity or social life – it was a historically constructed order that managed to make itself necessary. This aspect is preserved at the novel's end by the phrase "memories of whiteness receded, memories of whiteness lingered too" (Hamid, 2022, p. 51).

Nonetheless, the ending should not be lauded in an overly positive light as utopian resolution. The novel presents what could be considered a minimal post-human hope: not the abolition of hierarchies, but the loosening of one hierarchy's certainty of vision. In "a new kind of sight," there is both promise and contradiction (Hamid, 2022). Sight has been the issue all along in the novel. Race is visually perceived; bodies are evaluated; fear is communicated through vision. A new vision must mean more than just being colorblind. It needs to mean relating, being vulnerable, understanding history, and recognizing our shared mortality without reducing differences.

The ambiguity matters because, within a post-humanist framework, fluidity must never be celebrated without qualification. While fluid identities can be empowering for people stuck within static identities, they might equally well be seized upon by people seeking to distance themselves from history. If everyone ends up being dark in Hamid's town, then former whites might see themselves as having no more responsibility to their white identity, since they no longer have a body that embodies it. The novel does not

answer this question. The most powerful thing about it is its diagnostic function, exposing the way that the human has always been dependent on racial legibility.

In this way, *The Last White Man* is a post-humanism of exposure rather than one of transcendence. It does not transcend humanity in its transition to machine, animal, or cosmos. It goes beneath the humanist subject to expose the physical, raced, affective, and mortal conditions which produced this subject. Anders becomes post-human not for failing to be human but for having lost the ability to conceive himself as an autonomous, white, unchanging entity. Oona becomes post-human not by losing her humanity but by having to construct an identity out of love, media, loss, family, and transformation of the body.

In this way, Hamid's novel meets the challenge set out by Wolfe (2010) through breaking away from humanism without breaking away from human beings. Characters retain their intensely human nature: they fear, desire, err, grieve, and show compassion. It is the metaphysical comfort of Man that gets abandoned. This novel stresses the fact that humanity is not an asset that is contained in a fixed body. It is a relationship that gets defined in light of change. To be human, for Hamid's post-humanist novel, means not staying oneself for eternity but becoming through others in conditions beyond one's control, and understanding that one's own body has always been shared by others.

5. Conclusion

Hamid's (2022) *The Last White Man* is not just a fable about the disappearance of whiteness. It is a post-humanist novel about the disappearance of the self-reliant human identity whose stability was made possible in part by whiteness. Using Anders, Oona, the ill-fated father, and the uncertain town, Hamid demonstrates that identity is embodied, relational, fragile, and historical. The changing skin color does not release anyone from race but lays bare the racial framework within which humanity is constructed and denied. Seen through Braidotti (2013) and Wolfe (2010), the novel reconceptualizes humanity not as essence, freedom, and continuity but as becoming. Thus, the last hope of the novel is intentionally incomplete: a world where people can learn to see each other beyond racial assumptions and their histories that are embodied within the body without pretending that this history no longer exists. This incompleteness is what makes the novel serious and ethical.

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