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From Reiterative Practices and the Naturalization of White Privilege: A Critical Analysis of Mohsin Hamid's The Last White Man (2022)

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Abstract
The main concern of this study is reiterative practices in Mohsin Hamid's (2022) The Last White Man, which aim to create and normalize white privilege. The study aims to demonstrate that whiteness is not something that is in people, but rather something that is a creation of society, sustained by reiterative practices, as described by Judith Butler, through repeated acts of recognition, institutional norms and everyday social interactions. The study is qualitative and interpretive in nature and takes a close reading of the novel, to analyze the strategies of reiteration in the novel and how these reiterative strategies help maintain white privilege. The analysis examines the ways in which Hamid deconstructs the natural and stable construct of whiteness, showing how it must be constantly reinforced socially. This racialisation of these practices results in a disruption of such practices and thus reveals the fragility of white privilege and its performativeness. The study helps in the literary and cultural studies by providing the Butlerian interpretation of race, identity and social construct of whiteness in the contemporary fiction.

Keywords: Reiterative Practices, Performativity, Whiteness, White Privilege, Racial Identity, The Last White Man.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Dyer, R. (1997) theorizes that the whiteness is a strong but unseen norm which supports the social and cultural hierarchies. In his view, whiteness is hardly ever recognized as a particular racial identity; on the contrary, it manifests itself as the universal, neutral norm upon which all other races are evaluated (PP. 1-14). This invisibility is the key to its strength, as white people can also view themselves as not being racially branded, but rather as normal or human, and others are the different or other. This makes whiteness avoid critical examination, and it goes on to influence systems of representation, knowledge and authority without inquiry. He points out that this invisible position allows whiteness to be dominant by being natural and inevitable, thus perpetuating the existing social inequalities as well as covering the mechanisms behind it.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Most of the scholarship on race and identity has often highlighted marginalized groups such as whiteness, which has remained overlooked and an unacknowledged norm. Hamid's novel disrupts this stream of invisibility of whiteness and marks it as a visible category by imagining the disappearance of whiteness. The narrative depicts the anxiety, resistance and violence that is generated by this shift, revealing whiteness as a performative identity moulded through reiterative practices rather than an essential truth. Whiteness has been analyzed in terms of power, privilege, and colonial histories; there is a research gap of analyzing whiteness as a performative identity that relies on reiterative practices and social recognition to sustain itself. This study seeks to understand how whiteness is stabilized and deconstructed using performative theory. It aims to highlight how whiteness is not an innate category but a performance whose dominance and privilege unravel once its repetition is disrupted.

1.3. Research Objectives

- To analyze the"reiterative practices" that are used in Hamid's *The Last White Man (2002)*.
- To evaluate the ways through which white privilege is produced and naturalized in a societal context.

1.4. Research Questions

1) What "reiterative practices" are used in Hamid's *The Last White Man (2002)*?
2) How white privilege is produced and naturalized in a societal context?

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study contributes to different spheres of studies, specifically literary, theoretical and socio-political. On the literary front, it adds to the existing scholarship on Mohsin Hamid by analyzing *The Last White Man (2002)*not merely as a narrative about race but as a critical appraisal of the construction and deconstruction of white. While Hamid's work has been approached in the contexts of race, migration, identity and post-colonialism, this study will emphasise how this narrative dramatises racial privilege through the disconcerting idea of its disappearance. Theoretically, the study expands the scope of Judith Butler's performativity theory beyond gender, applying it to the realm of racial identity and whiteness. This demonstrates the vast applicability and versatility of Butler's theory in uncovering how whiteness is not a fixed entity but a mold created using socially acceptable reiterative practices.

1.6. Delimitation of the Study

This study is limited in a number of significant ways to ensure that the study is focused and analytical. To begin with, the study is limited by the fact that it focuses solely on the textual analysis of *The Last White Man (2002)*and explores more complex matters of race, migration and globalization, this paper narrows down to

discuss the construction and deconstruction of whiteness as a performative identity. The theoretical approach, such as performativity theory given by Judith Butler without consistent references to the idea of whiteness. This limitation provides a narrowing down of the application of the performativity theory to the study of racial identity. It focuses on one particular topic, such as whiteness and white privilege, and does not provide a detailed overview of all racial identities that are represented in the novel. The experiences of non-white identities are presented only in a way that contributes to the understanding of the construction of whiteness and instability. Also, the thematic and theoretical dimensions of the text are mostly explored in the research, and no empirical data, reader-response analysis, or sociological fieldwork is provided.

2. Literature Review

Butler, J. (1993) continues her ideas by expressing that how social identities are fixed by enacting the same performances according to the dominant cultural discourses. She claims that identities are not formed before social interaction but they are constantly produced through discursive and social practices that govern the way bodies and identities are perceived in the society. She pays attention to the functioning of power in terms of discourse to influence what identities will be socially acceptable and legitimate. She describes that the dominance of discourses like cultural norms, institutional practices and social expectations determine structures within which people carry out their identity. These discourses also perpetuate some behaviors, appearances, and utterances that are deemed acceptable or normal whereas excluding those that do not fit the parameters. She makes is that it is through repetition that the identity is stabilized. People constantly recreate the expected performance of their society needs, through language, body movements and daily routine which slowly leads to the illusion of identity as something set and natural. She however believes that this sameness is

just a mirage created through constant repetition of acts of normality. In practice, identity is not solid and stable since it is a performance that continues to change depending on the actual performance rather than a core or an essential core. She emphasizes the fact that identity formation process is closely tied to systems of power controlling the recognition of which identities are seen as legitimate. Dominating discourses define the forms of identity that are cultural intelligible and those that are excluded or marginalized. Because of this, identity formation entails the reproduction process and a potential of disruption of social norms. Because identities are created through performance, it is possible to destabilize or undermine the performance in order to reveal the performativity of identity and disrupt domineering power structures.

The major idea in the theory by Butler is that through repetitive social performances, identity is constructed and maintained. Butler in *Gender Trouble (1990)* claims that gender is the stylization of the body which is a repetition of acts that is within a very strict regulatory framework. (Ch. 3, P. 43). This knowledge explains how identity is not created out of an internal essence but is an ongoing activity that is repeated within socially approved norms. Similarly, she notes that the art of the illusion of a lasting gender identity is perpetuated over time by repetitive performances. (Ch. 3, p. 45) In this case, Butler notes the aspect of time repetition in order to stabilize what is seemingly natural or fixed. The repetition of the norms produces the impression of a continuous intelligible identity which can be stretched to include an interpretation of whiteness in the novel by Hamid. Like gender, whiteness can be seen as an enacted social identity, and it is identified and confirmed by various forms of repetitive behaviors, privileges and recognition in society. Performativity should not be taken to mean an act, but the repetitive practice through which discourse brings into being the effects that it claims. (Ch. 1, P. 2). This observation highlights the fact that acts in themselves are not identity

but a series of acts over time and social situation generates a consistent sense of identity. In the case of whiteness, it implies that the social recognition, institutional power, and cultural reinforcement together maintain the view of a solid racial identity. In the story written by Hamid, the whiteness is suddenly lost, and these performances are disrupted and reveal the vulnerability and constructive whiteness of white identity. It is the repetition of an act that makes identity, rather than something in-born. (Ch. 3, P. 46) The given principle is essential to the analysis of the work by Hamid: the novel is dramatizing the breakdown of the social performances, which comprise whiteness, disclosing it not as an innate characteristic, but as a result of social practice.

Another fundamental work of performativity is the concept of reiterative practices the repetition of acts and behaviors which stabilize identity. Butler (1993) observes that it is true that through repetition, acts become normalized, making them appear normal. (Ch. 3, P. 46). Repetitive actions lead to the illusion of a natural identity as well as perpetuate social stratifications. She underlines that the repetition of norms through time brings the effect of stable identity. (Ch. 1, P. 3). This kind of reiteration is specifically used in comprehending whiteness. White identity, and the privileges that it comes with, are constantly being strengthened by institutional acknowledgment, social behaviors and cultural norms. In the absence of these repetitions as depicted in the novel by Hamid, the social and material reality of whiteness starts to become blurred. Identity is not a linear action but a repetitive practice, which is constantly quoted. (Ch. 1, P. 5). It is important to mention the idea of ongoing citation: identity is a performativity outcome, which needs social recognition and confirmation. The transformation of the skin color in the characters of the novel is an allusion to the abrupt breakage in these repetitive exercises, revealing the artificiality and performance of whiteness.

According to Butler, it is not only through acting that identity is performed but controlled by social norms and power formations. She (1993) notes that only bodies that are intelligible are intelligible, and the others are not. (Ch. 1, P. 6). The norms are used to establish which identities are accepted in society and which are marginalized. This observation is vital in the study of whiteness: the society does not only perpetuate the white identity, but it also defines whiteness as a standard, according to which other racial identities are measured. Similarly, Butler (1990) argued that the actions that occur are limited by a code of social norms that dictate what is intelligible. (Ch. 3, P. 44) Intelligibility of identity is therefore conditional to the compliance to the regulatory frameworks. The white privilege operates in this framework: it is acknowledged, reproduced and reinforced because the white bodies are accepted by socially acceptable actions. This is what Hamid disrupts in his novel by depicting the abrupt loss of whiteness by questioning the same norms of validating and enforcing this identity, which was enforced prior to its creation. Butler (1990) claims that the repetition of norms that make bodies material and socially recognized has power in it. (Ch. 1, P. 10) It supports the notion that power, norms, and identity are not independent; whiteness is not only acted but also established, politically, and socially, and the loss of it in the story is all the more noticeable.

Stefancic, R. D. (2017) theorizes the issue of race, identity, and power has been theoretized widely in various fields, especially in Critical Race Theory (CRT) and poststructuralist thought. Some of the most prominent claims of the CRT are that racism is not extraordinary, but the usual way in which society does business (P.7). This means racism as a distinct or individual phenomenon and puts it in the context of being embedded in the very cloth of social, legal and political structures. This is of utmost importance in appreciating how whiteness is normalized and is mostly working behind the scenes as the default racial group. Such invisibility is

interrupted in the Hamid novel because the characters find themselves changed inexplicably and are forced to face the constructed and privileged whiteness to the society. Race and races are objects of social thought and relations and that race is socially constructed not biological (P. 8).

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Paradigm

An interpretivist research paradigm is adopted in this study since it perceives reality as socially constructed and situation-specific and connected to human experiences instead of objective measurement. Creswell, J. (2014) portrays that the focus of the interpretivist research focuses on the meaning of complex social phenomena by examining how individuals or even groups of individuals set up their reality in a given circumstance. This paradigm can be applied in the literary research to an intensive examination of the socially constructed identity like whiteness as it is manifested in *The Last White Man (2002)* by Mohsin Hamid. This approach is supplemented by the performativity theory by Butler who imagines whiteness as a socially constructed and repeated identity, which is perpetuated by repetitive norms, social recognition, and cultural practices.

3.2. Research Design

This study is qualitative in nature. The study addresses the presentation of whiteness and white privilege in *The Last White Man (2002)*by Mohsin Hamid, and how the construction, sustenance, and lack of stability of whiteness and white privilege are enforced through the workings of social practices. This study uses textual model by Braun and Clarke (2006) which is based on the performativity theory by Judith Butler. In order to address the text on a systematic level, the study uses the thematic analysis model offered by Braun and Clarke (2006) that consists of six stages that include (1) getting to know the text, (2) coding preliminarily, (3) theme search, (4) theme review, (5) defining and naming themes, (6) final report.

The method enables the investigator to find the trends in the story that show repetitive practices, rules, and the enactment of whiteness connecting the results to the theoretical model proposed by Butler.

3.3. Data Collection

This study uses two types of data such primary data and secondary data. The primal consists of *The Last White Man (2002)* by Mohsin Hamid and the works of Judith Butler such as *Gender Trouble (1990)* and *Bodies That Matters (1993)*. These texts are chosen due to the explicit work with an issue of whiteness and its loss, which explains its appropriateness in the analysis of the performativity of constructing and destabilizing the racial identity. The secondary data consists of other critical views, books, journals, articles, other critical views etc.

3.4. Data Analysis

Textual analysis is applied to analyze the data followed by a thematic analysis model developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) as a systematic way of identifying a pattern, analyzing and reporting a pattern in the text. The steps such as familiarization with the text, creation of preliminary codes, finding themes, themes review, defining and naming Themes and production of the report. It is a systematic but interpretative way of analyzing the text between rigor and depth. Although textual analysis may be subjective and dependent on the context of analysis.

3.5. Theoretical Framework

The interpretation of identity as a phenomenon of construction by society is the key in the modern literary and cultural studies. In this study, the theory of performativity (1990, 1993) by Judith Butler is used to examine whiteness and privilege presented in *The Last White Man (2002)*by Mohsin Hamid. Butler questions the essentialist understanding of the identity, conducting that identities, such as gender and race, are not inherent, pre-determined, or body-based, but are

created, recreated, and held constant by repetitive social practices. Here, identity is an outcome of norms, practices, and regulatory forms instead of a given essence. Using this ideas as a theoretical framework to examine the concept of whiteness as a constructed social category which is supported by privilege and the repetitive societal acknowledgement and is destabilized when the performativity structures are interrupted.

3.5.1. Performativity

Judith Butler, in *Gender Trouble (1990)* assumes that identity is created through repetitive social performance rather than pre-essentiality.

Gender is characterized as stylizing the body, which is produced via repetition and presence of a strict regulation system (Ch. 3, p. 43).

Identity is thus a continuing process which is continuously structured and supported by socially accepted norms.

This repetitions gives a false sense of having a consistent identity, which is reinforced over time and causes that to appear natural (Ch. 3, p. 45).

The process of performativity is not a one-off but a repetitive act within which discourse creates the effect of identity (Ch. 1, p. 2).

3.5.2. The White Identity is a Socially Constructed Identity.

It is facilitated by privilege, recognition, and repetitive social activities.

That these performances in the novel are interrupted indicates the created and precarious nature of white identity.

Repetition, rather than inherent, produces identity (Ch. 3, p. 46).

3.5.3. Reiterative Practices

Butler (1993) underlines the fact that it is the repetition of acts and behavior that stabilizes identity.

Repetition helps to make actions seem natural, normalized (Ch. 3, p. 46).

Such practices of reiteration produce a sense of a predetermined identity as well as strengthen social stratifications.

The identity is an ongoing process and not just a one-time citation and repetition (Ch. 1, p. 5).

3.5.4. Power and norms of rules.

According to Butler (1993), social norms, and power are social constructs of identity.

Only the identities, which are normative, are intelligible and socially acceptable (1993, Ch. 1, p. 6).

These norms determine as which identities are authenticated? which are marginalized? In racial terms such as whiteness is a hegemony, the evaluation of other identities. Laws restrict the social activities and define what is acceptable (1990, Ch. 3, p. 44).

The mechanics of white privilege are whitification and naturalization and enactment of white bodies and practices.

4. Discussion and Analysis

4.1. Reiterative Practices of White Identity Formation

Ander's transformation is a symbolic transformation which means that whiteness is not fixed, it also depends upon social recognitions and constructed through constant repeated actions.

One morning Anders, a white man, woke up to find he had turned a deep and undeniable brown…except that by now he had his phone in his hands and he had reversed the camera, and he saw that the face looking back at him was not his at all. (P. 09)

Anders wakes up only to discover that he has become significantly brown, and, after glancing at his phone, he does not see his own reflection at all. This takes on a sudden physical change that throws him into panic, disbelief and disorientation

as he struggles to reconcile the body that he is with the socially constructed identity that he has been playing. His broken perception is highlighted in the narrative, as Anders wonders whether the transformation is real and he envisions a second individual living in his bed and frantic searching on the self and the surroundings highlights the failure of his stable self-identification. Butler (1990) states that it is not a pre-existing identity, but the repetition of actions which defines the self (P. 46), one can interpret Anders as white, the process of being white, as the result of constant social practice, the behavior, the acknowledgment of the others, and the adherence to the societal norms, which once did the job of establishing his identity. When such performances are interrupted, the formed identity of whiteness will start to shake, showing that it is dependent and performance based. It demonstrates the panic, the fury and the alienation of Anders to criticize the vulnerability of the white privilege and to show the whiteness as something socially constructed, dependent upon repetitive performances of confirmation and recognition. It represents the vulnerability of racial identity through whitelessness, which confirms that identity is brought into existence and stabilized by repetitive social practices, as opposed to inherent nature Delgado and Stefanic (2017) suggests that the fact that racism is not unusual, it is business as usual in the society (P. 7) immediately paves the way to the concept that the fact that Anders was a white man in the first place was an invisible and normalized system of privilege. His panic and disorientation are not the consequences of physical change but the implication of the upset of a racial stance that had been socially legitimized and presumed throughout.

4.2. Reiterative Practices of White Recognition

The transformation of his body and behaviors alters the perceptions Oona has towards him to take him as the person he used to be. Anders may still have his basic size and shape, but he seems essential different, which shows how frail and

artificial identity is. The fact that Oona is not able to reconcile her memory of him which means that self-evidences that social recognition is central in the process of constituting identity.

When he emerged she was taken aback, not merely because he was darker… and it was only when he spoke and she heard his voice that she knew for certain, despite the fact that she had already been told, that it was indeed him. (P. 16)

The experience that Oona goes through with the transformed body of Anders reminds the reader about the precarious and performativity identity. She notes that Anders is no longer to identify him, more than merely the same rough size and shape, and that even the expression in his eyes had changed. This understanding of change highlights that identity is not an innate or fixed aspect but is a socially constructed and propagated term in the reiterative action. Such an external change by Anders breaks the way Oona thinking about him, thus creating a sense of disturbance. Butler (1990) points out that identity is made through the act of performing as opposed to existing. It is not the essence that one performs but the action that one performs time and again that constitutes the identity (P. 46). The repetitive social actions, his actions, his appearance and how other people identified him had made a stablet identity in the case of Anders. When these repetitive performances are modified, society and even his close associates such as Oona are shaken in terms of the identity that they had been depending on. Butler (1993) explains that identity is produced through the process of social repetition and recognition such as performativity should not be seen as an act, but rather reiterative and situational practice in which discourse produces the effects that it identifies (P. 2). The new look of Anders breaks into this repetitive practice, disrupting the social and psychological formations that had before helped Anders define himself. His unwillingness to identify him and his inability to do so until his voice confirmed him proves that identity is dependent on the perpetual

recognition of society. Even the familiar identities may become alien without social reinforcement being carried out repeatedly. This observation agrees with the point that Butler made in her work, that gender is the repetition of the stylization of the body, a series of repetitive acts that comprise a highly strict regulatory frame (Gender Trouble, Ch. 3, p. 43). The change of Anders disrupts the stylization of the familiar by revealing the fact that what appeared to be natural about his identity even his being white was not about the repetition of his performance, but rather a part of a social frame. Delgado and Stefanic (2017) theorizes that the idea of differential racialization, according to which the dominant society racializes the various minority groups, at different times, in reaction to the changing needs to the labor market, etc. (P. 9). The change in the appearance of Anders shows that racial identity is not rigid but it can be redefined through social reinterpretation. This change of identity to become unstable, as soon as it does not match the social racial expectations, is reflected in Oona not being able to identify him immediately. The disconcerting shift in perception of Oona could also be explained in terms of power and privilege that reside in racial identity. Whites will only accept or even encourage blacks to make racial progress when it also promotes their own interests (Delgado & Stefanic, 2017, P. 23). This implies that the previous whiteness of Anders was not only an individual one but a structural one since it was congruent with the structures of privilege. After this balance has been broken by his transformation, his identity stability, as well as the very ease with which others identify him, falls apart, revealing the relationship between recognition and power dynamics instead of innate identity.

4.3. Reiterative Practices

It is a term used to denote the repeatability of social behaviors, norms, and actions in which identities are created and sustained in society. Identity does not exist inherently but rather it is constituted by a repeated act of social acceptance of

practices. These practices are the daily acts, actions and social requirements that individuals engage in daily which slowly build and strengthen identities. When this is applied on race or whiteness, such practices built the social recognition, the privilege, and the institutional norms that are repeating continuously, due to which the whiteness seems to be a natural and dominant element in society. In this way, repetitive practices can be used to describe how identities and power structures are reproduced on a daily basis via daily social interactions.

The way people act around you, it changes what you are, who you are, (P. 34)

When Anders is thinking of the social aspects of his abrupt transformation. Though he thinks that at first he is still the same man inside he starts to appreciate that his identity starts to be redefined by the reaction of other people. At the time when Anders was white, his social spaces he inhabited were unchallenged. He had a social system of acceptance and authority that was with white people that governed his interactions at work, in the community, and with his social relations. Having undergone the transformation, He was not sure of how he is viewed by the people, and how his behavior can be perceived. Not only does he observe himself to be quieter, but "recast as a supporting character" (P. 31), as he puts it, in his own life. Such a moment depicts that identity is not merely constructed by individual perception but it is created by social interaction and identity. The change in the behavior of people towards Anders reveals the daily operations of how whiteness used to be as a place of privilege and centrality in the past. The use of social trust, familiarity, and comfort became a habitual practice that kept enhancing his identity that he was a white man. As soon as the visual signifier of whiteness is removed, such practices are thrown into dismay and Anders starts to feel some sense of social displacement. Therefore, this demonstrates that whiteness is not only a biological category but also a socially constructed identity relying on recurring types of recognition in the society. Butler (1990) theorizes that identity is not

something inherent but the result of habitual social practices. She believes that gender is the recurring stylization of the body, a collection of recurring practices in a highly strict regulatory frame (P. 43). She (1990) suggests that identities only seem to be stable and natural since they are reproduced in daily performances. She also adds that this deception of permanent gender identity is perpetuated over the years by reactive practices (P. 45). It explains that how the whiteness in the novel is a performative identity maintained by repetitive social practices. Prior to the transformation of Anders, his whiteness was being reinforced on a daily basis through the simple interactions of trust, acceptance and unquestioning membership in the spaces of the public. These practices served the same purpose of being re-enactment practices which normalized his privileged status in society. The response of others was instrumental in his stability as a white man. When Anders loses the visible sign of whiteness, the cycle of these practices is disrupted. The alteration of the social performance that supported his identity by the new behavior of people around him leaves Anders wondering who he is. It shows that whiteness is made and normalized through the repetitive processes that are part of daily social life and institutionalization. Whitelessness as an idea that reveals the vulnerability of whiteness. Once the bodily signifier which makes the performance of whiteness possible is lost, the social conventions according to which a bodily performance used to be confirmed start falling. The story demonstrates that whiteness is never a natural or solid identity but a precarious social construction that only exists by being perpetuated through repetitive practices of recognition and privilege. Identity is not created in isolation but it is created through contrast and relational forms. Africanism is the means through which American self perceives itself as not being enslaved, not being repulsive, but desirable; not helpless, but licensed and powerful (Morrison, 1992, P. 52).

4.4. Reiterative Practices of Cultural Transmission of Whiteness

The breakdown of social identity is not just limited to Ander by losing their white color but such problem is faced by others and particularly by Oona as well. They became like an alien in such society because nobody was there to recognize their true identity.

On the way back to his father with the painkillers, both hands on the steering wheel, Anders noticed just how many dark faces there were, and how the town was a different town now, a town in a different place … ambulance and it was just driving normally, no siren blaring, just driving from someplace to someplace on a regular day. P. 65)

Anders is on his way to a house of his father and the painkiller as he notices that the town is very different. The thing that impresses him is the sheer multitude of people of dark complexion in the streets that makes him feel that the town is a different town, a different country. Though Anders himself has become dark-skinned, he is unsettled. This discomfort is important as it indicates that racial identity and associated power, familiarity, and privilege of whiteness are social mediated and not inherent. The anxiety of Anders reveals that identity is interpersonal because his own identity is structured in society and what other people can see. It highlights the importance of the environmental and social signals as controls of identity. Anders interprets the town and the people as an indicator of how stable the social hierarchies and white privilege were. It represents that it is only the case of whiteness being upheld by the persistence of the society that makes it a socially intelligible identity. The turnover of the town indicates the breakdown of that acknowledgement such as the routine happenings of social life that maintained whiteness (ordinary interaction on the street, acknowledgement by others, mundane visual supremacy) is shaken. The social change that Anders sees as a metaphorical message of the different country he sees signifies that the old standards that favored whiteness have ended. It portrays a literary example of how

whiteness is weak, demonstrating that that identity of being white is socially constructed and perpetuated in repetitive acts and acknowledgement. Butler (1990) writes that identity is constructed within the limit of what is considered normal, intelligible and approved by a society (P. 47). The discomfort of Anders is the indication of the breakdown of such normative limitations the regulatory system that had previously rendered whiteness a natural state has changed. Even being a dark-skinned individual, Anders feels disoriented due to the fact that the patterns of social expectations and recognition, which brought identity its integrity, were disturbed. The story demonstrates that identity is not predetermined and is rather a constant performance in the society as whiteness can only be in place when society does it again and again. Butler (1993) posits that the bodies are governed by norms and the norms are replicated by bodies (P. 12). The sense of a town filled with dark-skinned bodies, as portrayed by Anders, points to the role of bodies in being social cues, recreating or disrupting norms. Whereas the white bodies once legitimated the intelligibility and legitimacy of the whiteness, the spreading of the dark-skinned bodies now breaks this pattern, making it clear that whiteness is an effect of the social, not a biological, phenomenon. The fact that Anders remains uncomfortable even after transforming him further reinforces the idea that identity is relative to the social contexts of relations. It reveals the performative and whitened quality of the white identity by stripping Anders and the town of their whiteness, demonstrating that the privilege is conditional on a social repetition. The sense of anxiety and observation of Anders of the transformed town depict how the whiteness is disrupted when the repetitive flow of recognition, visibility, and social reinforcement stops. The bewilderment Anders undergoes is the understanding that racial identity is a social construction that is strengthened by the assertion that race and races are a product of social

thought and relationship, not objective, inherent and fixed (Delgado & Stefanic, 2017, P. 8).

5. Conclusion

*The Last White Man (2002)*makes white privilege, which is a series of practices that are repeated social practices, recognitions, institutional norms, and embodied action, which create whiteness as a normal, dominant, and unquestionable norm. The study uses performativity theory created by Judith Butler according to whom whiteness is neither biological nor an innate identity but a consequence of social repetition. One of the most significant recurrent practices is everyday social recognition. How in his pre-transformation state Anders is going through the world without asking questions without being under constant observation, trust, and acceptance of people. Such repetitions of his whiteness and his frequent experiences with it contribute to his whiteness and his being as something natural and normal. However, this unconditional identity is lost after he becomes a dark man and it turns out that his previous identity was dependent on the continued affirmation of social identity. What is closely attached to this is continuity of normative practices. Being a white man, Anders occupies much of the public space with ease, he is able to gaze upon people, he is able to walk, all of this is socially permitted and supported in the long run. When he transforms, he is quite cautious, not desiring to be noticed and alters his body language, and this fact proves that these freedoms were not born, but was trained upon and upheld by repetition. Institutional and spatial practices are significant to replicate white privilege. There is an unwritten rule of the hierarchy in gyms, workplaces, neighborhoods, which demotes whiteness to the center, has made it authoritative and trustworthy, time and again. The aspect of Anders being a respected individual in the gym, as it stands to be, is not an inherent quality but the product of recurrent dynamics wherein individuals refer to him and confirm the role of authority. When he is no

longer recognizable, then these institutions of support disintegrate and the process of whiteness reproduction via social organization is seen as having been perpetuated. As a significant practice of reiteration, visual recognition may also be applied. The whiteness is socially intelligible according to the repetitive visual identification- in this instance, the color of the skin is a signifier and recognition, trust and acceptance occur. This fact that identity depends on repetition of visual clues in a shared social system as seen in Oona is inferred by the fact that the identification of Anders did not occur until he started speaking. Material and protective systems are involved that lead to naturalization of white privilege. The safety, access to resources and family support is not by chance but a part of an even bigger network of repetitive practices, which supports whiteness as safe and privileged. These supports being conditional to the performance of whiteness by Anders can be illustrated in the fact that his vulnerability is becoming stronger due to his transformation.

Other major reiterative practices include the reconstruction of social strata and power. The aspect of authority is naturalized to the extent that to Anders, even the previous status of being regarded and the center point of his community is maintained by the repetitive acknowledgment accorded on him by his peers. The instant that these repetitions are violated, his social status topples and this demonstrates that power is not inherent but is played and acted and accepted on a daily basis. Similarly, the novel raises the issue of social construction of fear and othering due to repetition. White bodies are related to being safe and normal, whereas dark bodies are connected to suspiciousness and danger. Following his transformation after becoming part of the insect, Anders discovers this transformation personally and it proves that these associations are not necessarily true as they are acquired through social conditioning. Finally, discursively, whiteness is overcome using narratives and memories. Even when the physical

denotations of whiteness have disappeared, characters are trying their best to keep the narrative and transmit it to the next generation. However the inability of the younger generation to fully understand it represents the fact that unless whiteness is exercised on a daily basis, the very idea of whiteness and the discrimination is incoherent and meaningless.

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