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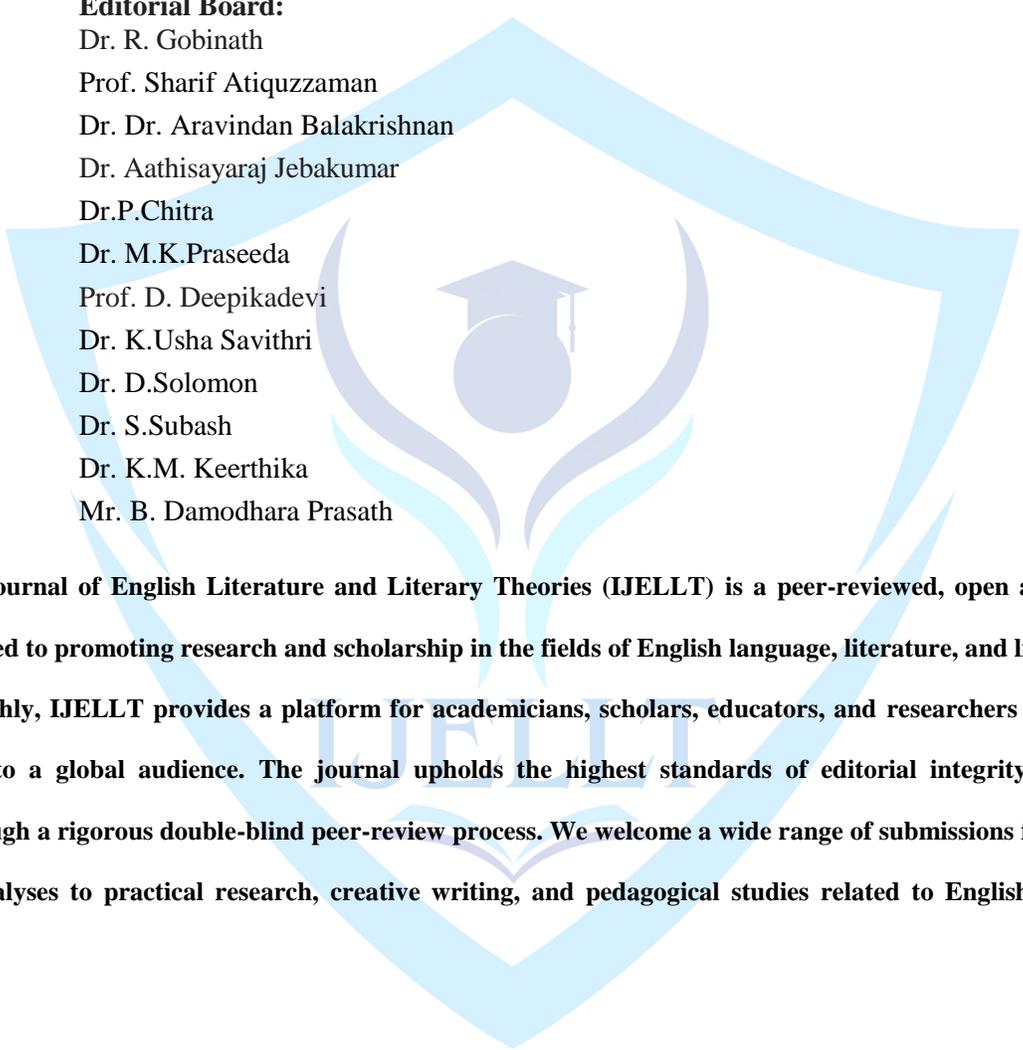
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From Vulnerability to Strength: The Role of Adaptive Capacity, Identity and Resilience Building in Mohsin Hamid's The Last White Man

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Abstract: The paper examines the novel's portrayal of identity, adaptability, and resilience in all of its facets. The study looks at how characters deal with and overcome the confusion and alienation brought on by their altered identities through the experiences of those close to the protagonist, Anders. The examination centres on the characters' psychological fortitude, emphasising their coping techniques and flexible approaches. These include the need for supportive connections, adjusting to new realities gradually, and maintaining normalcy in the face of upheaval. The study also looks at how these identity changes may affect society more broadly, illuminating the community's worries, resistance, and ultimately adaptability. The study highlights the significance of comprehending and embracing change to achieve resilience by investigating themes of empathy, candid communication, and introspection. In the end, this article seeks to provide readers with a thorough grasp of how *The Last White Man* delivers a critical commentary on societal institutions and the flexibility of racial categories in addition to addressing the emotional challenges of its protagonists. By using this lens, the book forces readers to reconsider their assumptions about privilege, racism, and identity while highlighting the transformative potential of adaptability and resilience in the face of significant change.

Keywords: Identity Shifts, Psychological Resilience, Adaptation, Race and Identity

Mohsin Hamid, a well-known modern writer, is recognised for his provocative and widely read books. Themes of identity, globalisation, and the intricacies of interpersonal relationships are frequently explored in his writings. *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013) is written in the style of a self-aid book, which follows the life of a poor youngster in an Asian metropolis as he ascends to power and money. It looks at the societal and personal effects of fast economic growth. Themes include love, ambition, the price of achievement, and the changes in Asian socioeconomic conditions in the modern era. *Exit West* (2017) The story of the book centres on Saeed and Nadia, a young couple who escape their war-torn nation by travelling to various locations throughout the globe via a sequence of enigmatic doors. The narrative delves into themes of migration, displacement, and the pursuit of a sense of place. The worldwide ramifications of conflict and migration, love and human connection, the refugee crisis, and the permeability of borders are the themes. *The Last White Man* (2022), where the protagonist of this book is Anders, a white man whose skin has attained a dark complexion when he wakes up.

The novel examines societal and individual responses to racial identity alterations as more people experience similar changes. Themes include adaptation, psychological resiliency, race and social standards, and identity alteration. Hamid frequently uses cutting-edge storytelling devices, including the self-aid structure of *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* and the dramatic monologue in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. His writing is renowned for its emotional depth, clarity, and conciseness. Identity, migration, globalisation, and the sociopolitical problems of modern society are recurring topics throughout Hamid's works. Hamid's sophisticated portrayal of cultural and political issues is informed by his global perspective and personal experiences as an expatriate Pakistani. Hamid's work has been recognized with multiple honours and nominations; among them are the Asian American Literary Award and a place on the Man Booker Prize shortlist. His books have received praise from readers all around the world and have been translated into other languages. Mohsin Hamid is a prominent figure in contemporary literature because of his literary works, which provide insightful analyses of the human condition.

In Mohsin Hamid's novel *The Last White Man*, the protagonist, Anders, is a white boy who one day discovers that his skin has become dark. The novel opens with "One morning, Anders, a white man, woke up to find he had turned a deep and undeniable brown." (LWM, 3) Anders is not the only one going through this mysterious metamorphosis; it soon becomes clear that a large number of people in his neighbourhood and beyond are going through similar changes.

Delving into issues of identity, race, and human connection, the novel examines the repercussions of these alterations on a personal and societal level. Anders's amazement and confusion at his new identity are depicted at the beginning of the novel. His first response, which is one of terror and loneliness, is a reflection of a deep-seated worry about his position in a culture that has historically given preference to white people. Anders's connections with everyone around him, especially his father and lover Oona, change significantly as the phenomena of ethnic metamorphosis spreads. Oona, who struggles with her ethnicity and identity, turns out to be a vital source of support for Anders.

As they both adjust to the new reality, their friendship is put to the test and ultimately grows stronger. In contrast, Anders's father embodies a more conservative and resistant perspective, finding it difficult to accept the loss of his son's paleness and everything that it entails. There is a divided response from the larger society to the changes. While some respond violently and in terror, others start to reflect on and reevaluate their deeply held racial stereotypes and preconceptions. In *The New York Times*, Parul Sehgal stated that "Hamid's narrative is at its most powerful when it delves into the psychological transformation of his characters, revealing how external changes force them to confront their innermost fears and prejudices."

The world portrayed in the book is one in which racial borders are melting and people are being forced to face their prejudices and reexamine who they are. The main focus of the book is the evolution of identity, both individually and collectively. It investigates the flexibility of self-perception and questions the idea of fixed racial identities. The racist attitude could be seen towards the white people in this.

He was overtaken by emotion, not so much shock, or sorrow, though those things were there too, but above all the face replacing his filled him with anger, or rather, more than anger, an unexpected, murderous rage. He wanted to kill the coloured man who confronted him here in his home, to extinguish the life animating this other's body, to leave nothing standing but himself, as he was before (LWM, 4-5).

As their circumstances change, the novel's characters show varying degrees of persistence and adaptability. The story looks at how people handle significant life transitions and the methods they employ to stay true to who they are. The book exposes the artificial nature of racial categories and the ingrained prejudices that support them, criticising societal standards regarding race. The tale emphasises the value of empathy and human connection in overcoming fear and division as characters negotiate their new surroundings.

The book also discusses the resistance and dread that frequently accompany change. It investigates how people and society respond to the unknown and how these responses can take the form of either violence or development.

The Last White Man by Mohsin Hamid is distinguished by its profound emotional content and lucid prose. He conveys complicated ideas through a simple narrative format, which makes the book approachable and encourages the readers an in-depth analysis. Hamid explores race and identity freshly and provocatively by using change as the main topic. An insightful examination of race, identity, and human resiliency may be found in The Last White Man. Mohsin Hamid provides an engaging commentary on the malleability of identity and the capacity for development and empathy in the face of significant change via the experiences of Anders and other characters. The book asks readers to reevaluate their preconceptions of race and to picture a society in which these lines are less defining and more porous.

Identity changes are a major plot point in Mohsin Hamid's novel The Last White Man. The unexpected and unexplained change in the protagonists' skin hue is explored throughout the story, along with how it affects their perspectives of others and themselves. They are forced to confront deeply held ideas about power, race, and belonging as a result of this transition. Anders is deeply shocked and alienated when he first realises his skin has become dark. He realises the social ramifications of his new look, which is why his first reaction is one of fear and a wish to conceal. Self-Perception and Internal Conflict: Anders experiences feelings of bewilderment and loss as he battles with his self-perception. His perception of himself is called into question by the metamorphosis, which causes an internal struggle between his former identity and his present circumstances.

Anders gradually starts to acclimate to his new identity. He gradually comes to terms with his place in society and his interactions with other people as part of his acceptance journey. Anders's girlfriend Oona has a complicated relationship with her own identity and race. Her own experiences and social perceptions of race affect how she reacts to Anders's metamorphosis. Oona proves to be a reliable source of support for Anders despite his initial doubts. Her understanding and openness to comprehending his experience are vital in assisting him in adjusting to his new identity. Oona considers her own identity and her prejudices as a result of her contacts with Anders.

Personal development and a greater comprehension of the nuances of racial identity result from this. The responses of the larger community to the pervasive changes vary from pure terror to open violence. These answers demonstrate the ingrained prejudices and the society's resistance to change. As more people experience comparable changes, racial norms in society are called into question. The mixed emotions of Anders and Oona could be seen as,

Sometimes it felt like the town was a town in mourning, and the country a country in mourning, and this suited Anders, and suited Oona, coinciding as it did with their feelings, but at other times it felt like the opposite, that something new was being born, and strangely enough this suited them too. (LWM, 114)

Traditional ideas of privilege and race are questioned in the novel's portrayal of a society in transition. People are forced to reevaluate their connections and the foundation of their interactions with others as a result of the identity transformations that produce new social dynamics. As a result, power systems and social hierarchies are reevaluated. The more conservative and conventional viewpoint is embodied by Anders's father.

His inability to accept his son's new identity and all that it entails reflects the difficulties confronted by people with inflexible racial beliefs. Anders's father is first resistant, but he eventually comes around. His journey is a reflection of the larger cultural movement towards a more flexible definition of identity. The novel questions the idea of rigid racial classifications by highlighting the flexibility of identity. It investigates the construction, deconstruction, and redefinition of identity. The changes have an impact on interpersonal relationships and emphasise how identity shapes human ties. The book looks at how relationships can change and grow as a result of identity shifts. The characters exhibit different levels of resilience and adaptation in their reactions to their identity alterations.

The story looks at the coping strategies people employ psychologically to adjust to their new circumstances. To examine the intricacies of identity changes, Mohsin Hamid employs the motif of racial transition in *The Last White Man*. The book explores how people and society respond to significant identity shifts, emphasising themes such as empathy, self-perception, and the malleability of racial categories. Using the stories of Anders, Oona, and other people, Hamid provides a thoughtful examination of the opportunities and difficulties associated with managing identity transitions. Characters in Mohsin Hamid's *The Last White Man* exhibit varying degrees of psychological fortitude as they deal with the abrupt and unexpected changes in their identities.

The book focuses on themes of adaptability, support networks, and inner strength as it examines how these people handle the stress and uncertainty brought on by their changes. Anders feels alone and afraid at first after his metamorphosis. He isolates himself from people and finds it difficult to adjust to his new life, underscoring the shock and confusion that frequently follow abrupt, significant changes. Anders gradually starts to acclimate to his new identity. He slowly comes to terms with his altered appearance as he begins to go out and socialise with others. His psychological resilience is largely attributed to this adaptation process.

An important source of emotional support for Anders is his relationship with Oona. Her care and compassion guide him through his transition, highlighting the value of having relationships that are encouraging throughout times of change. Oona's psychological fortitude is demonstrated by her capacity to relate to Anders and help him through his transition. Her adaptability is influenced by her readiness to face her own prejudices and anxieties. Oona grows personally as a result of her interaction with Anders, which makes her consider her own identity and social conventions. Her ability to reflect on herself and adjust shows that she is resilient in the face of change. Fear and opposition characterise the wider community's early response to the changes.

These answers demonstrate how difficult it is for society to adjust to abrupt and significant changes. Individuals are beginning to show signs of empathy and unity as the changes progress. A collective resilience and the possibility for societal change are indicated by certain characters who start to doubt their prejudices and stand by one another. At first, Anders's father finds it difficult to accept his son's change. His resistance is a reflection of both the dread of the unknown and the difficulties in letting go of long-held ideas. Anders's father gradually starts to exhibit changing comprehension. His slow assimilation of Anders's new identity serves as an example of how people who at first oppose change can develop psychological resilience. The book places a strong emphasis on the value of resilience-building inner strength and self-acceptance. Anders's psychological resiliency is largely attributed to his path of acceptance towards his new identity.

Strong bonds between people, like the one that exists between Anders and Oona, are essential for building resilience. They can adjust to their new circumstances with each other's emotional support and understanding. Psychologically resilient characters are flexible and open to change, allowing them to adjust to their new environment. Maintaining mental health in the face of uncertainty requires this adaptability. The book also emphasises the resiliency that results from challenging and reassessing one's own ideas and societal standards.

Characters with higher psychological resilience are those who aren't afraid to face their opinions and adjust them. The characters in *The Last White Man* demonstrate psychological resilience by being able to adjust to significant changes in who they are. Anders's path to self-acceptance, Oona's compassion and encouragement, and the changing responses of the larger community all serve as examples of how complicated can become if resilience is when faced with change. Mohsin Hamid offers a comprehensive analysis of how people and society can deal with and adjust to unheralded changes by looking at these varied reactions. She emphasises the value of inner strength, dependable connections, and the readiness to reflect on and grow.

Mohsin Hamid examines how individuals in *The Last White Man* grow and use different coping mechanisms and adaptive techniques to deal with the significant changes in their identities. Referring to the novel, Kirkus Review mulls. "Hamid masterfully uses the personal struggles of his characters to comment on broader social issues, making *The Last White Man* a poignant and timely reflection on race and identity." The psychological strategies and actions that enable them to deal with the stress and uncertainty, these changes bring about are highlighted in the book. At first, Anders withdraws and stays away from others. But as he gradually opens up to the outside world, he finds it easier to adjust to his new persona. A crucial coping strategy is for him to gradually accept his new situation. Anders is very dependent on his girlfriend Oona for support. Her understanding and presence give him emotional stability and help him adjust to his new identity. Physical closeness and emotional reassurance are important factors in his adjustment. Routine and Anders regain control and stability by establishing routines and finding normalcy in everyday activities. By focusing on things that are familiar to him, he can reduce anxiety and feel more at ease. Oona's ability to empathise with Anders and put herself in his shoes is a crucial coping mechanism.

Oona can speak candidly and openly with Anders about her worries, which enables her to confront her issues head-on. Their mutual adaptability is supported and they can negotiate the changes in their relationship because of this openness. Oona reflects on herself to become aware of her prejudices and ideas on race and identity. This self-examination promotes personal development and aids in her adjustment to the changes. As more individuals change, some communities start to adjust as a whole. Rethinking social conventions and developing fresh interpersonal relationships are part of this collective adaptability. Many people in the community first react negatively and fearfully.

This resistance is a normal coping strategy that shows how hard it is to accept abrupt and big change. Some people eventually start facing and conquering their phobias. Periods of forming camaraderie and reciprocal assistance underscore the possibility of constructive group adjustment. The strength of community resilience can be seen in the actions of individuals who help one another and collaborate to deal with their new circumstances. At first, Anders's father tries to reject and deny the changes. His unwillingness to embrace Anders's new identity is indicative of a typical coping strategy used when confronted with unwelcome change. Gradually, Anders's father starts to exhibit indications of a progressive acceptance. This gradual process of adjustment entails reassessing his convictions and accepting the new situation, demonstrating that even the most recalcitrant people are capable of changing. The book places a strong emphasis on the necessity of adaptability and being receptive to new experiences.

Characters that exhibit these traits are more capable of adjusting to their new circumstances. Effective coping requires strong support systems, which include networks within the community and interactions with loved ones. In times of change, emotional and social support offer constancy and comfort. Characters are able to better control their tension and anxiety by practicing mindfulness and introspection. They can comprehend their feelings and reactions as a result of this introspection, which promotes healthy adaptation.

For many characters, tackling their concerns head-on is a crucial part of their coping strategy. Through confronting their fears, they can make progress in the direction of acceptance and adjustment. Characters in *The Last White Man* use a variety of coping techniques and adaptive tactics to deal with the significant identity shifts they experience. The community's collective adaptation, Oona's empathy and open communication, Anders's journey of progressive exposure and acceptance, and the final acceptance of Anders's father all highlight the intricate processes of coping and adaptation. Mohsin Hamid offers a sophisticated examination of psychological resilience and how people and societies may deal with and adjust to unforeseen changes via these varied answers.

The themes of adaptability and resilience are skilfully woven throughout Mohsin Hamid's *The Last White Man*, offering important insights into how people and communities deal with abrupt and significant change. Comprehending these themes in the novel enhances the examination of the characters and their experiences while also providing wider implications for human conduct in the actual world, societal dynamics, and cultural narratives.

Bernardine Evaristo quoted about the novel “The Last White Man explores the fluidity of identity and the arbitrary nature of racial categories, challenging readers to rethink their preconceived notions about race and privilege” (Bernardine Evaristo). The examination of Oona’s empathy and flexibility, Anders’s psychological toughness and the community’s many reactions to change underscore the complexity and diversity of coping strategies. The significance of inner fortitude, encouraging connections, and receptiveness in handling identity transitions and other life-altering events is highlighted by these literary representations. Examining adaptation and resilience in literary contexts outside of the novel helps readers develop empathy and critical thinking by delving deeper into the human condition.

It offers a prism through which to see the institutions and values of society, especially during difficult or transitional periods. Literature’s enduring significance and power are highlighted by its ability to reflect and critique cultural myths, represent marginalised perspectives, and explore universal themes of struggle and growth. In the end, comprehending adaptation and resilience in literature allows one to appreciate the human experience on a deeper, more complex level. It invites readers to develop a closer bond with characters, see the resiliency in both themselves and other people, and apply these realisations to their own lives and communities. One learns more about the resilience that supports and the significant and frequently difficult process of adapting to change by looking through the prism of The Last White Man.

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