

DIGITAL COLONIALISM AND IDENTITY: A POSTCOLONIAL ANALYSIS OF
MOHSIN HAMID'S *THE LAST WHITE MAN*

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Abstract

This study investigates the themes of digital colonialism, cultural corrosion, and identity crisis through a postcolonial analysis of Mohsin Hamid's *The Last White Man*. Employing Edward Said's concept of "Other" and Couldry and Mejias's framework of digital colonialism, this research examines how Anders's transformation serves as a metaphor for the exploitative nature of digital colonialism. The novel illustrates the effects of digital colonialism, such as cultural homogenization and identity loss, which are perpetuated through data extraction and constant surveillance via digital platforms such as Facebook and Google. By drawing parallels between Anders's emotional and psychological turmoil and the challenges individuals face in today's globalized, digitally dominated world, the study reveals the profound impact of surveillance and data commodification on personal and cultural identity. The findings underscore the role of literature in addressing pressing societal issues and call for further exploration of the intersection between literature and digital technology in understanding contemporary human experiences.

Keywords: Digital Colonialism, Identity Crisis, Postcolonial Analysis, Surveillance, Mohsin Hamid, *The Last White Man*, Data Commodification.

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INTRODUCTION

Mohsin Hamid is a well-known British Pakistani postcolonial writer. In most of his novels, he addresses the issues of identity crisis, diaspora and hybridity. His famous works include *Moth Smoke* (2000), *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013), *Discontent and Its Civilizations* (2014), *Exit West* (2017) and *The Last White Man* (2022).

In Mohsin Hamid's novel, *The Last White Man* (2022), the main focus is a white Man, Anders. One morning Anders wakes up and finds that his skin has turned black. He confronts discrimination based on colour and faces identity crises which lead to the deprivation of the privileges that he once enjoyed as a white man. Anders's transformation serves as a metaphor for racial and societal transformation, reflecting broader societal inequalities similar to digital colonialism. Digital colonialism involves the use of technology and the internet to exercise influence over the cultures, identities, economics, and societies of the marginalized groups and countries, thus putting the privacy and security of the individuals and states at risk. This study examines the transformation of Anders and the identity crises, racial discrimination and fear of marginalization based on the colour that he faces after transformation in the context of digital colonialism exercised by the powerful Western states and companies through the use of technology and the internet. This practice has deprived marginalized individuals, groups and underdeveloped countries of their privacy and has risked their security, identity, culture and economic autonomy through spying, surveillance and data collection.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study aims to:

1. Explore why Anders's transformation serves as a metaphor for the flattening of cultural distinctions in a globalized, digital society.
2. Examining how the identity crisis that Anders experiences after his transformation reflects the broader identity crises induced by digital colonialism.
3. Investigate why the societal scrutiny Anders faces parallels the experiences of individuals subjected to surveillance and data exploitation in the digital age.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What parallels can be drawn between the physical surveillance of Anders in *The Last White Man* and the real-world consequences of data exploitation through digital surveillance?
2. How does Anders's transformation make him a target of societal scrutiny, and why does this resonate with the experiences of individuals under digital surveillance?
3. Why does the novel use Anders's identity crisis to highlight the psychological and emotional impacts of digital colonialism on individuals in a globalized world?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Classic colonialism began in the 15th century and continued until the late 20th century. It involved Europeans' control over foreign land through military infrastructure, the erasure of the indigenous knowledge and culture, economic exploitation, and extraction of labour to obtain raw material and shipping it back to their countries for the production of goods to sabotage the markets of Global South with cheap products that perpetuated economic and military dependency of the Global South (Kwet, 2021).

Classic colonialism is also reflected in Said's (1979) concept of *the Orient*. According to Said (1979) the East is represented as the 'Orient,' in need of civilization and the West, as the

'Occident,' burdened with the weight of civilizing the East. 'Orient' is a European construct, to exercise its dominance over the East (Said,1979, p.1).

Orientalism is a discourse that has been constructed through various institutions including politics, sociology, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and through the arts. Orientalism, as a discourse, is in an authoritative position. *Orient* cannot be thought about as a 'free subject' but has always been constrained by the limits imposed by *Orientalism* and the *Orient* has been constructed as *Other* (Said,1979,p.3-4).

However, due to the advances of the technology, the classic colonialism and the *othering* have been transformed into digital colonialism.

Digital colonialism is the use of digital technology to gain political, economic and social domination over another nation or territory (Kwet,2021).

The logic of digital colonialism is rooted in colonialism's historical dynamics of exploitation, extraction, and domination. Digital colonialism is the process through which dominant groups and corporations extract data and value from marginalized communities, often without consent or compensation (Couldry&Mejias,2019,p.85).

Digital colonialism shows how dominant countries take advantage of the digital world, creating a form of control through data and algorithms (Veracini&Hightower,2023).

Similar to the classical colonialism, where the South was looted and extracted through physical infrastructure, digital colonialism assesses the Big Tech to spy over and process the data of its users to provide them with tailored services and treat them as subjects (Kwet,2019).

Historical colonialism (Classical Colonialism) is linked to the exploitation of the people, labour and resources of the land however data colonialism on the other hand controls human life through data extraction and exploits it for profit. Historical colonialism supplied for industrial capitalism while Data colonialism provided for capitalism through the exploitation of data. In both form of colonialism, human life is linked to capitalism (Couldry & Mejias, 2019,p.xi).

Latif et al. (2021) explore the effects of social media, especially Facebook, in perpetuating cultural imperialism in the developing countries by promoting Western cultural values and reinforcing existing inequality in the exchange of cultural values.

In the context of the Postcolonial Theory and digital colonialism, the dominance of global tech corporations such as Google and Facebook mirrors the systemic exploitation and power imbalances historically perpetuated by colonial forces, just as colonial power extracted resources and imposed control over colonized societies, these corporations exploit user data and monopolize digital spaces, perpetuating a new form of imperialism. This dynamic is reflected in *The Last White Man*, where Anders's transformation strips him of his societal privileges, exposing him to surveillance and marginalization. His experience serves as a metaphor for the ways in which digital colonialism operates—eroding autonomy, reinforcing hierarchies, and exploiting individuals for profit.

The dominance of global tech corporations (Google, Facebook, etc.) is akin to the exploitation that Anders faces in the wake of transformation through surveillance and marginalization after losing societal privileges (Hamid,2022).

The Last White Man (Hamid, 2022) has been extensively explored by researchers from different angles. Ali & Khadim (2024) have explored the effects of Anders's transformation on Oona and Anders's personality in *The Last White Man*, in the context of racism, identity and otherness through the framework of postcolonial theory as propagated by Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Homi K. Bhabha, and Leela Gandhi.

Amir et al. (2024) explore the theme of identity crisis and racial injustice conveyed in the novel *The Last White Man* through magical realism using the lens of Faris's theoretical framework. According to the study, Mohsin Hamid used magical realism as a narrative technique in *The Last White Man* to make the inexplicable, sudden transformation of Anders authentic in a realistic world with vivid descriptions of the places and characters.

Khan et al.(2023) analyzed the novel using the framework that is shaped by the *Panarchy: Understanding Transformation in Human and Natural Systems* (2002), edited by Lance H. Gunderson & C. S. Holling, and *Leading Change* (1996) by John P. The study examines Anders's transformation, his rejection to accept the change and the reaction of the society to that change, like Oona's mother and his Father, passing through initial rejection to final acceptance.

Rasheed et al. (2024) explore the psychological trauma and legacies of colonialism in *The Last White Man* by examining the characters' experiences related to their racial identity, cultural background and social status from the postcolonial perspective, using the framework introduced by Whitehead (2004). The study analyzes how the novel is the reflection of colonialism, its effects on the postcolonial societies and how it challenges it. The study explores Anders's experiences and challenges after transformation.

Mastoi et al. (2024) conducted a postcolonial analysis of *The Last White Man*. Homi.K. Bhaba's concepts of mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence are used as a theoretical framework to analyze Anders's transformation, the resulting identity crisis and cultural hybridity. The study explores Anders's struggle with his dual identity, as being white psychologically and brown physically, and his later reconciliation with his new identity.

The Last White Man (Hamid, 2022) has been extensively explored, particularly from a postcolonial perspective while focusing on the themes of hybridity, cultural dynamics, psychological struggle, identity crises and racial discrimination.

However, this study analyzes the novel through the lens of Data colonialism as presented by Couldry & Mejias, (2019) exploring how Anders's transformation and its effects are akin to digital colonialism and its effects on individuals, societies and cultures.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses the qualitative research to analyse *The Last White Man* (Hamid,2022), using close reading and textual analysis. Anders's story is examined as a case study of digital colonialism and its effects on individuals and society.

This study uses Couldry&Mejias's concept of data colonialism (2019) postcolonial theory and discourse analyses as a theoretical framework to examine how Anders' transformation metaphorically represents the extraction and exploitation of personal data in digital systems. Specific scenes, events and characters will be identified and analyzed to examine digital power imbalance and the impacts of digital colonialism on individuals, societies and cultures.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Last White Man provides a rich exploration of the themes of digital colonialism such as data extraction and surveillance, its impact on individual and collective identities, and resulting cultural erosion.

Data is the information gathered through human activities and analyzed using servers, cloud computing systems and databases for profit generation. Data is extracted via digital tools that are used to interact with others. This relation is called a data relation. It links human life to capitalism and subjects it to constant scrutiny and monitoring. This

sabotages human autonomy and threatens the basic freedom of individuals (Couldry & Mejias, 2019, Pp.xii,xiii).

The social quantification sector has been growing since 1980 through the accumulation of data. It includes manufacturers of digital communicative devices such as Apple, Microsoft and Samsung; social platforms such as Facebook, Google, and WeChat; data brokers and processing organizations like Acxiom, Equifax, and Palantir, which sell data to other organizations. This processed data helps the organizations like Netflix and Spotify to customize their service or to develop a connection between buyers and sellers like Airbnb, Uber, and Didi. Facebook and Google have been performing the same job that was previously performed by the state companies like East India Company, the Hudson Bay Company, and United Fruit, which is destroying its colonies and enriching their empires (Couldry & Mejias, 2019, Pp. xiv,45).

So, human life is continuously being tracked, termed as *surveillance*, through social interaction and location tracking, depriving people of their autonomy and personal freedom.

In the same way, after his transformation, Anders has to face societal scrutiny and surveillance. Although internally he is the same old Anders but his physical transformation makes him the subject of societal scrutiny and surveillance.

“He had to go out and face the world, or at least the clerk at the grocery store. He put on a cap and wedged it low”(Hamid, 2022, p.9). On the first day of his transformation, Anders tries to escape the situation. He avoids facing the outside world and takes leave from his boss, despite that he still has to face the outside world. He wants to stay at home but cannot because he needs to go out for food and face the world. He tries to hide his new identity by hiding his face with a cap (Hamid, 2022, p.9).

In the parking lot, he faces the hostile looks of the white people, looking at him with distrust. Later the reactions of Oona, his father, and Oona's mother to Anders's transformation mirror the societal scrutiny akin to surveillance through data extraction. Anders experiences this scrutiny and surveillance in the form of the gaze of the white people in the parking lot of the grocery store (p.10), in Oona's refusal to accept his transformation (p.12) and her reluctance in responding to his messages (p.15), apprehension of his father at his changed colour (p.20) and the way he is stared at by everyone in the gym (p.24). The violent reaction of the whites to drive the brown people out of the town leads him towards alienation, as he confines himself in his father's house, limiting his freedom due to the fear of attack by the violent groups (p.50-52). Similarly, Anders at a workplace becomes quieter and confused about his actions, he fears how the world would judge his actions, which is again the reflection of fear of societal scrutiny based on superficial metrics (Hamid, 2022, p.29).

This scrutiny by society also reflects the concept of *other* that Said (1979) presented. According to Said (1979) through the concept of *other*, binary opposition is created between West and East. East is made 'other' as being inferior, uncivilized and exotic while the West is presented as superior and civilized (Said, 1979).

Anders after transformation becomes *other*, inferior as being judged by the society based on colour instead of his actions. He is being scrutinized and faces discrimination. The internal struggle of Anders's reflects his *internalized othering*, as he fears facing the mirror, and struggles to believe the coloured man in bed is no one, but he himself. After a week off, Anders joins the gym again, there he experiences the gaze and the scrutiny of the society. Everyone stares at him; he tries to maintain his individuality by behaving

independently but soon comes under pressure and starts to imitate the expressions and behaviour of others but despite his efforts he fails to get acceptance (Hamid,2022,p.24). This attitude reflects his frustration at being observed and judged for his colour. Anders's effort to mimic the people around him reflects the conformity to societal expectations which often results in the loss of autonomy and fragmented identity akin to the reduction of the individual's identity to the curated identity under digital colonialism exercised through social media and technology.

Hongladarom (2020) reviewed Zuboff's (2020) concept of surveillance and examined the control that is exercised upon individuals through exploiting the data and termed it as surveillance capitalism. In this system, the user's data is converted into capital by selling it to advertisers who customize advertisements according to the model constructed by software like Google, targeting user's preferences. User's behaviour is predicted by Google based on the data gathered through algorithms that it has developed. This prediction of the behaviour strips the user of his autonomy because these algorithms then shape his identity and future behaviour through the collection of data and ad services (Zuboff, 2019, as cited in Hongladarom, 2020).

Cultural homogenization is the process that corrodes the local cultures and identities in the face of dominant culture, capitalism and technology are the main driving forces. According to Said (1993) culture is associated with the state or nation. This is the way through which 'us' is differentiated from 'them' and in that sense, it determines our identity (Said,1993,p.xiii).

David E. O'Connor (2006) defines cultural homogenization as "the process by which local cultures are transformed or absorbed by a dominant outside culture"(David E. O'Connor,2006,p.391).

The dominance of the Western culture over the marginalized culture through the use of digital technologies like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube is referred to as Digital imperialism which leads towards cultural homogenization. The content is mostly produced by the Western countries, especially the United States promoting Western lifestyles and values undermining the local traditions. Easy access to the internet and digital media has made it easy for young people to be influenced by the dominant culture, resulting in the loss of the unique culture and leading towards a homogenization of culture.

Latif et al. (2024) also reflect on the cultural imperialism quite akin to digital imperialism because they discuss it in the context of social media. They study Facebook accounts of famous Pakistani actresses who are promoting Western culture in terms of fashion and threatening the indigenous culture. This one way flow of culture from dominant Western countries has been targeting the youth of the underdeveloped countries like Pakistan.

Anders's transformation mirrors the impact of dominant the Western culture on the non-Western cultures.

He realized he had been robbed, that he was a victim of a crime, the horror of which only grew, a crime that had taken everything from him, that had taken him from him, for how could he say he was Anders now, be Anders now, with this other man staring him down, on his phone, in the mirror (Hamid, 2022, p.8).

The above quote reflects the pain of losing one's identity. His thought of transformation as a *theft* reflects the psychological torment that he suffers due to the change that he experiences without being aware of its cause.

The phrase "how could he say he was Anders now," reflects his longing for his lost identity and self-esteem. He avoids looking at himself in the mirror and in the phone, however, he can't escape the look of his hands and arms that reflects his sense of loss.

He tries to hide his new identity, "He wore a hoodie, his face invisible from the sides", "so he kept his hands in his pockets and a backpack slung over one shoulder to carry whatever he had to come out to get", "His hands could mostly stay hidden, slipping out only to open a door or slide across a payment, a flash of brown skin like a fish darting up to the surface and down again, aware of the hazard of being seen" (Hamid, 2022,p.18).

The choice of clothing, such as wearing a hoodie and hiding his face, reflects his sense of insecurity. His choice of clothing and his effort to hide himself, serve as a metaphor for his loss of privileges of moving freely in the outside world with confidence and without fear.

Keeping his hands in his pockets reflects the fear of judgment, dehumanization and marginalization based on colour. He loses the privilege and supremacy associated with whiteness. He also loses social relationships which he once enjoyed.

The people start ignoring him after his transformation and this leads him towards alienation. Anders's loss of identity and privileges due to transformation reflects the loss of cultural uniqueness of the marginalized groups under digital imperialism.

In the historical colonialism land, resources, and labour was appropriated for capitalism, now in the digital age, personal data is being extracted through Facebook, Instagram and Whatsapp by dominant countries, appropriated and sold for capitalism, leading towards digital imperialism, where every individual is being monitored and tracked, to customize uniform consumer behavior (Couldry&Mejas, 2019,p.85).

In this technological world, the network services that collect data of users, whether through devices or websites, are termed as digital platforms. Digital platforms like Facebook, Twitter, WeChat, Uber, Airbnb and Netflix have given their owners a gatekeeping power like the sea routes that served the same purpose in the historical colonialism (Couldry&Mejas, 2019,p.51).

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube have played a significant role in spreading Western content. The Western culture and algorithms from the US and Europe are being prioritized through this platform which promotes content that favours Western lifestyle and cultural values (Ishaya,2024). Social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter are programmed to scrutinize users' interactions, preferences and tailor the content to optimize their browsing experience.

The Last White Man (Hamid,2022) also highlights the systemic biases against race with a special focus on Blacks similar to algorithms that prioritize Western content over non-Western perspective. As Sichach (2023) has explored algorithms that are powered by Large Language Models (LLMs) and used by social media to prioritize Western content over non-Western perspectives. The algorithms used by social media mostly display the content that matches users' previous information thus limiting them to Western dominant perspective and content. Large Language Models and algorithms promote English language, concepts and terminology because of the biased data they are trained on, resulting in culture hegemony. Algorithms and LLMs promote trending and popular content that could result in the erosion of cultural diversity.

At the individual level, Anders's reaction to his transformation reflects the biases that Western society holds for Blacks. His reaction to the transformation and his later attempts to hide his new identity reflect the biases that he would have to face in the society

where whiteness is the standard of supremacy. His mobile's failure to recognize his black face (p.8,9), reflects the biases promoted through digital algorithms. He feels himself trapped within his house in the intimidating and tense company of a black man(p.9), reflecting the perception of the white people about the presence of the black people in the society as a source of hostility, and conflicts, resulting in the psychological turmoil of the whites.

Oona's initial thought to cut Anders off when he tells her about the crisis he grapples with (p.13); the gaze of the whites in the parking lot of the grocery store (p.10); and the attempt to attack Anders by the white men who warn him to leave the town (p.51), all reflect the judgmental attitude of the society and the marginalization of the non-Western culture in the face of the algorithms promoting Western cultural values and perspectives.

While roaming about the town, Oona feels difficulty in identifying people who were transformed and has to identify them through the shape of their cheekbones and the texture of their skin and hair. They appear to her like trees that are to be distinguished through their appearance like from branches, bark, height and leaves overlooking their uniqueness such as belonging to a different class of plants like moss, or fens (Hamid,2022,p.73). This reflects the systemic biases prevalent in the Western society where identity is decided on the basis of appearance especially colour resulting in the marginalization of individuals and communities. Oona's perception of the transformed people reflects the homogenization of the diversity and uniqueness of individuals' identities and cultures under digital colonialism where algorithms by favouring dominant narratives and content, flatten the richness of the non-Western perspectives.

Oona while having a meal with her mother just happens to have a look at her distorted reflection in a clean spoon. She notices it just because of the dark colour, *too small dark head* reduced to the hollow space of the spoon. She notices that her head is darker than the head. The reflection, that serves as a funhouse, vanishes when she scrapes the left out food with the spoon (Hamid,2022,p70).

Oona's distorted reflection serves as a metaphor for the non-Western perspectives that are marginalized by the dominant Western narratives. The distorted reflection of Oona reflects how the prevalent systemic biases distort the identity of the marginalized community akin to the prioritizing of Western content over the non-Western perspectives through biased algorithms operated through digital platforms.

It reflects the ways of constructing and promoting global narratives. Just as the shape of the spoon distorted Oona's reflection, similarly, the non-Western perspectives are misrepresented and marginalized through the algorithms that are dominated by the content that promotes the Western perspectives.

IMPACT ON INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY

Anders's hesitation to accept the transformation serves as a metaphor for an individual's losing agency under digital colonialism. Wake up transformed, he tries to assure himself that it could be a momentary change, reverses his mobile camera and refuses to believe that it is he who is looking back at him, goes to the bathroom, and finds it familiar. He faces the mirror but doesn't recognize himself or doesn't even want to. The reflection of the face in the mirror just fills him with anger and he wants to kill the black man. When he hits the reflection with his fist, the fitting, Cabinet, mirror everything falls apart. He waits for its undoing, which doesn't happen. He even avoids looking at his mobile but cannot escape the look of his arm. His mobile doesn't even recognize his face. He doesn't see anyone nor does he want to be seen. He thoroughly examines himself from the white man's perspective.

He examines the quality of his skin and hair on his scalp as well as of his face, and the colour of his toenails and reduces himself to a disgusting sea creature (Hamid,2022,p.7-9).

This hesitation, anger, hatred, and rejection of his transformation reflect his helplessness and lack of agency. He felt helpless; he could neither undo the change nor could accept it. This self-perception of Anders serves as a metaphor for individuals who lose agency under digital colonialism, where identity loss puts them into a state of ambivalence.

Oona's reaction and remarks at seeing him, for the first time after transformation were shocking for Anders. Her remarks that he is not recognizable and looks to be a different person, intensify his loss of identity and his eyes fills with tears (Hamid,2022,p.13-14). Anders feelings reflect the helplessness of an individual at losing agency and identity under digital colonialism.

Data colonialism (digital colonialism), involves data extraction and manipulation without the consent of the users (Couldry&Mejias,2019).

So, under the influence of digital colonialism, individuals lose agency to make decisions or choices. It is enforced through data extraction and digital imperialism by using digital technologies like the internet, and mobile devices, mostly owned by the dominant countries.

IMPACT ON COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND CULTURE

The initial reaction of the society towards Anders's transformation was that of a denial reflecting the fear and struggle associated with accepting change. Oona refused to accept the change, even thought of disconnecting herself from Anders (Hamid,2022,p.13).

She is shocked when she sees Anders; he is utterly a changed person only recognizable from his voice. "She told him what she thought, flat out, that he looked like another person, not just another person, but a different kind of person, utterly different." This quote reflects her reluctance to accept him (Hamid,2022,p.13-14).

Anders's father is reluctant to believe him when he tells him about his transformation on the phone. He doesn't believe him and asks him to meet him at home (Hamid,2022,p.19). When Anders's father sees him he realizes that his son would suffer due to his colour and weeps. "staring at the man who had been Anders." This quote reflects that even his father doesn't accept him as Anders but perceives him as another person (Hamid,2022,p.20). The reaction of Anders's boss reflects the conservative attitude towards his transformation, as he tells him that he would have killed himself if this had happened to him (Hamid,2022,p.23). The rising riots against the transformed people in the town, the killing and driving the coloured people out of the town (p.50), all reflect the racial prejudice and discrimination of the society. So, the society overall rejects the change.

Similarly, communities also reject the cultural and social changes introduced through digital technology. As Kirkpatrick (2019) stated in his article that digital technologies that has imposed cultural assimilation upon, faced resistance from the native Canadians who emphasized upon the preservation of their cultures, traditions, systems and languages.

Oona's mother is obsessed with online news and radio channels and believes that a certain plot is at work against the whites. After transformation, they have become others in their own country. She is concerned about the safety of her daughter and fears losing her as it would just be like a field that was previously green with crops but now has turned into a desert with growing cactus, without plants and life (Hamid,2022,p.30). This account reflects her sense of fear and loss of the individual and cultural identity similar to

algorithms that prioritize dominant narratives risking the diversity and uniqueness of the traditions and cultures of the marginalized communities. Oona's mother activeness on online media and the resulting behavioural change also reflects the notion of reinforcing dominant narratives and beliefs through algorithms that are based on curated data and limit exposure to diverse perspective.

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Anders wakes up brown, he doesn't accept the change. He considers it an optical illusion. He tries to assure himself that the brown person in his bed is someone else. He considers it as "a momentary conviction that there was somebody else in bed with him darker, but this, terrifying thought it was, was surely impossible." "The face looking back at him was not his at all." "The face replacing his filled him with anger (Hamid,2022,p.7-8).

These quotes reflect the psychological struggle that Anders faces due to his changed colour and the fear of societal scrutiny leads him towards alienation, as he himself was a white man and understands the way Blacks are judged and marginalized by the Western society.

Anders due to the fear of being seen hides himself in his father's home. His father advises him to stay away from windows, so that his presence may not be realized. It reflects the sense of alienation and isolation that Anders was experiencing (Hamid,2022, p.52).

Anders *stucks indoor*, despite a *sunny bright day*, with *curtains down* and the little bit of lighting coming from exposed areas just looking like the *bars of the cell* intensifying his feeling of being *imprisoned*. He feels himself being *doubly, triply imprisoned* due to his colour, scrutiny of the society and his emotional turmoil. This description conveys a strong sense of alienation and confinement that Anders experiences due to his loss of identity (p.53).

The imagery of light and darkness also reflects the confinement and limited opportunity for Blacks, while the bright, clear winter's sun, which could leave people snow blind, symbolize the freedom and prosperity that whites enjoy. This confinement and isolation reflect the marginalization of the non-Western cultures in the face of the Western culture imposed upon the underdeveloped countries through digital colonialism.

Anders metaphorical imprisonment in the cell with darkness inside mirrors how Western culture through digital platforms dominates non-Western cultures and has made them invisible and stripped them of their uniqueness. His triple imprisonment is parallel to the marginalization of the non-Western cultures based on colour, region, and economic status.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings suggest that Anders's transformation serves as a metaphor for the impacts of digital colonialism. His psychological turmoil at the loss of identity reflects the identity crisis and psychological impacts of digital colonialism upon an individual in today's digitalized world.

The parallel between Anders's experiences under societal scrutiny and the consequences of data exploitation and surveillance in the real world illustrates the loss of autonomy and agency of an individual under constant digital surveillance through the extraction and commodification of his personal data without his consent. Furthermore, the dominance of the Western culture, promoted through digital platforms, in the digital realm has flattened the cultural uniqueness of the non-Western cultures.

The societal reaction to Anders's transformation mirrors the systemic biases of the society akin to the experiences of marginalized communities and groups whose cultural values and

identities are targeted and scrutinized through biased algorithms used by social platforms, prioritizing Western narratives and contribute to the existing power imbalances.

This research highlights the importance of literature in bringing forth the societal issues associated with the advancement of digital technology and its impact on the identities and cultures of the marginalized communities.

Future research on the topic could be extended to literary works like *Exit West* (2017) to analyze the themes of imperialism and identity issue in today's globalized world.

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