



RESEARCH ARTICLE

DOES SOCIETY SHAPE LITERATURE? : AN INTROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF ARAVIND  
ADIGA'S THE WHITE TIGER

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ABSTRACT

Literature is the mirror to life and society. It depends upon the writer where he places the mirror. From time to time writers have been exploring the various dimensions of the relationship between man and society. The paper is an attempt to study about Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* in political corruptions, marginalization of poor people, identity, and inferiority complex higher class society over lower class. It also talks about how corruption corrupts the mind of common people. The animality and human identity were use of animal imagery in novel. In *The White Tiger* tells how the poor Indian man's struggle to come out from darkness with its poverty and his experience of life to reach into light. The paper also focuses on metaphor, symbols and imagery in Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*. Adiga reveals how marginalized people were ignored by education, religion, culture, race and economy and the gradual shifts of the protagonist as an entrepreneur

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INTRODUCTION

Aravind Adiga is a journalist, Indo European and diasporic writer. Adiga published is article in Sunday times, times of India, the financial times and New Yorker. He started to write white tiger in freelance period. The novel talks about unsent letters to Halwai a Chinese premier. His second book was between the assassinations it was shortlisted for John Llewellyn-rhys memorial prize in 2009. His last work is last man in tower in 2011. His book *The White Tiger* was awarded for Booker prize for debut novel in 2008. Adiga is fourth Indian born man to win Booker prize for fiction. Adiga was awarded Commonwealth Writers Prize and British Book of Award as author of the year in 2009. His novel *Between the Assassinations* essays the story set in a fictitious town of Kittur in southwest of India. It was taken from Adiga's hometown of Bangalore which make some diverse in characters and plots, the story taken on different religious, classes and caste in India. In every story, other characters were introduced, but names and places were again repeated in the other stories. Adiga novel was fall into two categories social and autobiographical. His novel strongly gives message about social criticism and unruly situations. Adiga's explanation about people in pain from all walks of life in modern India. Adiga novel were mainly focused on misery, sufferings, Indian society dejection

as a result of exploitation of downtrodden citizen. His novels are brilliantly crowded with the life of India as they are closely linked with social and political background of India. He is very sensitive towards the various anxieties felt by economically weaker section of the community. Aravind Adiga uses the devices like satire, irony and humour in order to portray the real picture of society. In the novel the writer equates on the individualism with power and majesty in East Asian countries such as China and Japan. The white tiger is a symbol for uniqueness and individualism. Balram's character starts his life in "darkness" and then finds his way to the "light". The novelist also talks about social class/caste in the novel and approaches Indian society negatively in treating the lower social caste. He refers it as "darkness" when he was asked for caste while searching for job. This shows different scene of lower caste in home town and his current high caste in his life, habits, styles and standard of living. "If you're rude to your mother in India, it's a crime as bad as stealing would be here" reveals Adiga protagonist who goes on to narrate the severity of actions. He had fear for his family to obstacle he must overcome Mr. Ashok's murder. He has imagined Buffalo (antagonist) in the street blaming for death of his family. After he became business man in Bangalore, he goes to the temple pray for spirits. He talks about duality of "light" and "dark", while darkness becomes a member of urban society. Then he tells "light" is location (Bangalore), wealth (lots of it), and multifaceted symbol of time (future). According to the protagonist,

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Poverty=darkness, wealth/success= light

The symbols Adiga uses in his novel "the white tiger" Balram earns a nickname by answering intelligently for officials with his intelligence and reading skills. White tiger is symbol as a rare talent as there is only one in ten thousand tigers that are white. Yang and yean according to myth they were considered as a energies, while one has positive energies, other as dark energy. The White Tiger is rarest animal likewise Balram has rare man in school. The "darkness" talks about rural area in Balram village were situated in Laxmangarh. It is fed as river gangs which symbolizes "river of death" where millions of Indian dead bodies were cremated. The "blackfort" is architectural centre price in childhood he fear to go alone, but he conquers is fear after he reached his adulthood. The black fort is symbol of extreme poverty of Balram village in Laxmanargh. Black fort depicts to the existing threats and the desperate of what Balram experience. The fort was located high in hill, and he looks down a village and decided to escape from rooster coop and never to return back to his village.

The "chandelier" is a symbol for light and dark. It symbolizes richness and victorious life, Balram was poor and then he became rich by killing his boss. The chandelier is full of shaped glass pieces with full of diamond, its show Balram struggle to get out of his poverty. The novel narrates the economic condition that creates socio economic gaps in forming big division within the society. The "rooster coop" that all the roosters were trapped in coop, the roosters were feel uncomfortable. When one slaughter is taken other roosters in the cage become happy. But the other roosters coop doesn't know they were next one. In Aravind Adiga white tiger animal imageries are the best metaphors used. The title white tiger used as metaphor to describe about central character Balram Halwai. It is signified has individuality, freedom and signifies power. The White Tiger is a species, harmful and predatory compared to the character of Halwai. The White Tiger is symbol of rare talent. The metaphor "jungle" references to area of light and darkness, he says jungle has dual area of lightness and darkness Balram travels. The writer portrays the two faces of Indian society, India of darkness and India of light. India of light has knowledge, technology, wealth and power after Balram reaches Delhi and Bangalore. India of darkness is village of Laxmangarh from which Balram hails and migrates to work in a town in Dhanbad. The 'black river' stands as a metaphor to reveal corruption and darkness in our country. The river is also symbolic as daughter of Vedas that breaks the chain birth and rebirth.

Along with the explicit vivid images and metaphors, the novelist endeavors to portray traditional social structure. In any jungle, what is the rarest of animals the creature that comes along only once in a generation? I thought about it and said: 'the white tiger'. 'That's what you are in the jungle'. (pg.no 35) The White Tiger in contrast with 'human spiders' as Halwai was working in tea shop, he had nothing in his life even his healthy body for materialistic things and comfortable life. Interestingly, 'The rooster coop' was the best metaphor used in addressing the dark living conditions of the miserable poor. The protagonist writes letter to Chinese premier where the rooster coop images are introduced. Balram describes the Rooster Coop as one that's "guarded from the inside." Balram believes that the traditional Indian family unit keeps the Rooster Coop of social inequality alive. If a servant attempts to escape or disobeys his employer, the superior's family will

punish the servant by murdering or brutally torturing his family. "Only a man who is prepared to see his family destroyed-hunted, beaten, and burned alive by the masters- can break out of the coop." Balram like other servants tied to the family master was trapped: "I was trapped in the rooster coop" (pg.no 179). Balram tries to break the coop and escape, he knows cage is poverty if he breaks his family would be at risk. At the end of the story the rooster coop alias Balram liberates himself when he slit's owner throat with whiskey bottle. He decides to take a breakthrough in his career and go beyond the life of servitude by becoming an entrepreneur running his own enterprise. He does not give up and says "... Never say I made mistake that night". When Balram felt necessary to kill his master to become free to get head in life he feels it was worthwhile to know for a minute, for an hour and just for a day.

The images used in the novel is that of scattered images of animal kingdom. The images bring predominant character poor were fighting with rich people. Adiga view on Laxmangarh by using it has darker side of India but shifting Balram character to kill his owner and become successful entrepreneur. Image of white tiger tells about true character of Balram and mere of tiger tells that Balram little kindness with vicious character. The images of other animals like bloody cat, monkeys, and bulls were related to analogy of experiences. The scenario of socio- political conflict is brought out by Adiga that occurs in the streets of India in detail to show the pathetic condition that cripples the country. Balram as the protagonist learned about country corruption, landlords in the village stole village people money and send young children were stopped from school and send to work to pay their debts. Balram not learn many things in school, because teacher not paid salary from the government. So the teacher refuses to teach for the students. Balram learned corruption system in medical system when his father died. The doctors were paid more in private hospital, so the doctor footing step into government hospital. Balram never got good treatment in hospital but the record shows as if they have been carried out. Adiga also highlighted the police in the corrupted hands and corruption also extends to prime minister. He tells that innocent people get to be blamed for crime they haven't executed. Adiga uses different examples of corruption in his novel that happens in India. Adiga clearly points out that who poor people were dominated by rich people, he try reveal unspoken words of people living in the darkness. He also talks about people class struggle in globalized world. He examines various issues in the novel like education, occupation, religion, caste, culture in India. In novel Balram is the protagonist writing series of letter to Wen Jiabao, how he become successful entrepreneur by introducing himself as 'white tiger'. Though Balram Adiga exposes each and every system corrupted especially government. Balram tells how he escaped from darkness and become successful entrepreneur.

Adiga talks about whom marginalized people where ignored by their caste, religion, culture, gender, race and education. The whole novel talk about the marginal aspects people haunts for the identity, economic balance and social value. Balram narrates his life to Chinese premier Wen Jiabao in seven night from his desk. Balram was born to rickshaw puller in dark corner of India, they were dominated by their landlords. Balram says India has two countries India of light and India of darkness. He says was born in darkness since place of freedom. When he visited roads and light, technologies in Delhi and it sector in Bangalore. Since Laxmangarh place were waiting

for acquire identity and hunting for development to get a place in geographical maps. In India uneducated people were working in tea shops, in novel work in tea shop with his brother Kishan and sleep on the road in night. He did many jobs like table sweeper and coal crusher but his jobs were never satisfied his earnings. The concern of Balram life was identity, food and shelter. Balram faced many problems in life, so he decided not die like his father waiting for doctor. Balram decided to learn driving to earn more money for his family. He gets a chance to escape from cultural inferiority, caste and tradition. He get job to drive car for Mr. Ashok born in same soil but raised differently in society. Balram is not ready to die in the identity of a lower class man of Halwai community or driver. Balram seeks for identity and later decides to come out of cage and become a 'the white tiger'. "We have left the villages, but the masters still own us, body, soul and areas". (pg.no:170)

Adiga reveals that lower classes are never been treated as human being because of lower birth, the protagonist is no exception to the fact and is also treated as animal until his grand success as a entrepreneur. The rich people treat dogs has petted, walked and pampered and but never treat their servants has human beings. Balram decided to travel to Delhi with his master to escape from darkness; he sees that developed cities also have slums like Balram lives. He sees that some people come to survive in light but still struggling for equal rights like Balram struggling. Pinky madam made accident and kill child, but Balram was forced to accept the murder to save Pinky madam not to trapped in the case. "The poor bastards had come from darkness to Delhi to find some light-but they were still in darkness"(pg.no: 138). Pinky madam decided to move from Delhi because she feels bored and ask Ashok to return to New York without any delay. Pinky leaves to her native New York, to get her own identity and social status in the society. In novel 'the white tiger' feminist were happy because Pinky and Balram grandmother have their own life style and set of rules. They don't want compromise the livings and values. Pinky leaves Ashok start to her own life and granny kusum dominates Balram family.

Balram becomes corrupted by reading murder weekly and Indian capital, life style and city been corrupted Balram made him selfish and evil so decided to steal the money from his owner. He kills his owner escaped to Bangalore and become successful entrepreneur. It is not easy to get identity in the dominant force of society, he undertake various jobs like servant, chauffeur, driver and murdered his owner Ashok. Adiga uses Balram has mouth piece of subaltern people who have no chance to speak in society. The character in the novel from marginal communities people living in despair, caste system and unfulfilled dreams. Balram says there is no clean water and electricity; the children populated become hungry and thin. Balram gets happy when he got job for landlords son Ashok, from villager perspective is good to living in city and driving car to swanky place. For villager become entrepreneurship is bigger change in his life. Ram Prasad another driver work with Balram, ram Prasad Muslim pretending to be Hindu exposed and he escaped. Balram had become senior servant; Ashok goes to Delhi to bribe money for minister and Balram along with him. Pinky madam leaves Ashok went to America, before she leaves give money to Balram, which he uses to spend on the prostitute. Adiga described corruptions, elections, superstitions, abysmal conditions of slums and treatment of servants. Adiga described

poor perspective of modern India. *The White Tiger* novel has class conflict between rich and poor, each class seeking to defeat each other. He described poor as feudal and western as rich. Balram explains why poor do not overwhelm their masters, he give example of rooster coop become powerless in cages. The novel tells corruption, caste, class, inhumanity, wealth and religion, call centre, it class picture of metro life. Adiga presents picture of Delhi accident and late drinking become common. The poor people has situation to live in road side and suffers for food and shelter. The poor people migrated from darkness of village to light find some capital.

In Laxmangarh power and rich people sucks the blood of poor people. Adiga gives four names to landlords the raven, wild boar, stork and Balram named Ashok brother has mongoose. The gap rich and poor become large the servants show hatred towards owner, Ashok become victim of hatred. The people in the darkness manage to earn money for the family, whereas people in lightness try to increase income in all ways. The dark humour in novel white tiger Balram depicts the life how he becomes driver from the darkness in India. How he become successful entrepreneur with murder, cunning and intelligence. Corruption and theft particularly become dark crime, become cycle of relentless poverty plagued his family. Dark humour used in novel talks about immorality of rich and poor, it also have coping mechanism cope with two effects immoral choices of rich on him and immoral choice of himself. Humour makes the story digestible, except for his sexist humour and the racist comments. In novel make people to do immoral activities to become wealthy and rich person.

### Conclusion

Adiga presents a critique of the individual vices such as deceit, hypocrisy, avarice and false pride in one's social status based on caste, religion and wealth and rotten religious, social and political systems which are working together for disintegration of human values and society as a whole. Adiga seems to implicitly suggest us to get rid of the individual vices, social evils and rotten systems through revolutionary social, economic, bureaucratic and political reforms. The issues raised by Adiga hold perpetual relevance for Indian society. In fact, the poignant use of harsh realities like corruption, politically motivated schemes, political decisions, layman's sufferings, cast- problem, dominance of zamindars over the downtrodden masses invokes catharsis from the reader, and in turn, rids their self-interest tendencies out of their minds. Fiction is obviously different than history, or non-fiction, which labels what, has happened. Fiction guides society into the direction of what has not yet been accomplished

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