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IN SEARCH OF EMANCIPATION AND MADNESS FOR IDENTITY IN ARAVIND ADIGA'S *THE WHITE TIGER*

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ABSTRACT

Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008) reveals the representation of the modern India and its economic and political conditions explicitly Adiga in fact discusses meticulously how the main character, Balram has developed from the childhood to maturity. It also foregrounds how Aravind Adiga attempts various instances to highlight Balram's plights of the enigmatic mundane existence from domestic sufferings, betrayal, alienation, subjugation, longing for emancipation, displacement etc., along with the sufferings of displacement and identity due to the mixture of suppressing circumstances. It efficiently sketches out the problematic survival of Balram undertaking complexities in the miserable conditions. It is a depiction of the social and economic inequalities of contemporary India. It is a penetrating piece of social commentary, attuned to the dissimilarities that persist despite India's new prosperity. However *The White Tiger* should make every right thinking citizen to read the signs of the times and be socially conscious of the rights and duties of each one, irrespective of caste, creed or economic status, to prevent create the types of Ashok and Balram in our society. This paper concisely explores the flamboyant depiction of protagonist's modern life and its complexities.

KEYWORDS:

Emancipation, Voiceless, Discrimination, Underprivileged, Subaltern, Self-Identity.

INTRODUCTION

Aravind Adiga is one of the greatest champions of Indian Writing in English whose work of art was imbued with political obligations which projected the survival of India's underprivileged in an accurate and compassionate manner. Adiga had resolutely conveyed the memorandum that political, social and human reasons are unpretentious preferences for the novel. Adiga's *The White Tiger* reveals the disunion between the elite and the underprivileged of India. Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* is high-pitched, enthralling, assaults insufficiency and discrimination. It is a ground breaking Indian novel and it is entirely from the perception of a servant. The novel transfers the survival of India's

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underprivileged in an accurate and compassionate fashion. *The White Tiger* is a story about a man's quest for self-determination and emancipation. Balram Halwai, the protagonist is the fatality of paucity and prejudice who worked out his way out of his low caste and overpowered the social complications that condensed his family in the past and completed his task by killing his master, pocketing his money, and become an efficacious entrepreneur.

Indian writers Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Amitav Ghose, Kiran Desai, Salman Rushdie, Jhumpa Lahiri etc., have been distinctively the beneficiaries of copious international literary prizes and awards. Universally, Aravind Adiga is one of the chief contemporary Indian English novelists who tried in projecting the lifestyle of the modern man. Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Anand and Raja Rao concentrate, on the social scenario of India and highlight the endeavours Aravind Adiga's main projection is on the individual psyche of the protagonist. Aravind Adiga explores the predicament of the protagonist who struggles in the middle of utter chaos and meaninglessness of the mind. He is concerned with the plight of voiceless community and is sensitive to the various pressures exerted on the human mind. The *White Tiger* novel depicts the plight of Balram Halwai who is totally lost in a world of meaningless and tries measuring to his life in the present. Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* reconnoitres various disputes on the basis of status, ethos, creed, education, employment and economy and represents the quest of the Indian society for its socio-economic egalitarianism.

Aravind Adiga was born in India in 1974, and educated in India and Australia. His debut novel *The White Tiger*, 2008 and won the Man Booker Prize. Adiga purposefully depicts the domination of the affluent people of India towards the deprived of dark India. He further attempts to expose the voiceless people who live in the obscurity and he also inspects the class scuffle of the Indian people. Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* is a confession and a series of seven letters written over seven nights by a self-taught entrepreneur called Balram Halwai. He addresses himself with comic bumptiousness to Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao who he has learned is coming on a fact-finding mission to Bangalore. This cowed unworthy servant wants to show the August foreign dignitary, the true entrepreneurial spirit of the country' as well as the soft and carefree life of the upper class and the hard, grim and pathetic life of the lower class. Balram Halwai is born in a village in the dark heart of India, in the house of a rickshaw puller, he lives in the city of Bangalore and talks of the city of Delhi. In the words of Balram, Adiga writes his story as, "Like all good Bangalore stories mine begins far away from Bangalore. You see, I am in the light now, but I was born and raised in Darkness." (14) Besides, commencing from Bangalore Adiga widens his vision and sketches the picture of Modern India as,

Please understand, Your Excellency, that India is two countries in one: an India of light and a n India of darkness. The ocean brings light to my country. Every place on the map of India near the ocean is well-off. But the river brings darkness to India – the black river. (14)

Balram Halwai continues discussing the village of Laxmangarh, in the district of Gaya-the town where Lord Buddha sat under a tree and found enlightenment and started Buddhism which then spread to the whole world including China and other cities like Dhanbad, Calcutta and Delhi keeping the inequality among classes and inescapable truth that the benefits of India's remarkable economic success are not dispersed fairly side by side. Especially Delhi life is primarily to be noticed where this inequality is visible fairly. Adiga talks of Delhi life in the novel in his conversation with Wen Jiabo, he says,

Now since I doubt that you have rickshaw pullers in China-or in any other civilized nation

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on earth-you will have to see one for yourself. Rickshaws are not allowed inside the post parts of Delhi, where foreigner might see them and gape. Insist on going to Old Delhi, or Nizamuddin- there you'll see the road full of them-thin, stick like men, leaning forward from the seat of a bicycle, as they pedal along a carriage bearing a pyramid of middle-class flesh-some fat man with his fat wife and all their shopping bags and groceries.(27)

Diaspora is the term coined from a Greek word *Diaspeirein* - "to scatter about, disperse", plainly refers dispersal from the original homeland to a dominant city/state with the purpose of colonization in the beginning, later in search of education, employment, and quest of trade or to supplementary aspirations. According to Bill Ashcroft,

Diaspora does not simply refer to geographical dispersal but also to the vexed questions of identity, memory and home which such displacement produces.writing is one of the most interesting and strategic ways in which diaspora might disrupt the binary of local and global and problematize national, racial and ethnic formulations of identity (217,18).

Balram Halwai is a servant from Bihar who recounts his comprehensive journey from the small hamlet called Laxmangarh, Bihar to the IT city Bangalore. He declares his act to the Chinese Premier. He was a knowledgeable underprivileged boy who terminated his educations due to the family conditions and nick named by the school inspector as *The White Tiger*. Balram gets a job as a driver for a corrupted business man Ashok at Delhi and disgraced by his master and master's family in all possible manners. His master shows dishonest compassion to him and later changed Balram as a murderer. Essentially Pinky Ashok's wife killed a child while driving in a drunken stage and later it was forced to sign a statement by Balram of killing a child by himself while driving the car thought he is a servant.

These compressions made him to murder his master and run away with his boss' money that was reserved for corrupting a politician. He started a taxi company at Bangalore and became a worthwhile entrepreneur.

Balram Halwai, *The White Tiger* is different from other animals and precarious. *The white tiger* of the novel is Balram Halwai, a poor Indian village dweller whose boundless determination hints him to the pinnacle of Indian commercial culture. On the occasion of the president of China's forthcoming trip to Bangalore, Balram writes a letter to him describing his conversion and his experience as driver and servant to a wealthy Indian family, which he thinks represents the paradoxes and impediments of Indian society. Balram moves to New Delhi with Ashok and his wife Ms Pinky Madam. Throughout their time in New Delhi, Balram is uncovered to the widespread exploitation of India's society, including the administration of the Government. In New Delhi, the consistencies between deprived and affluent become even more obvious by the combination of the affluent with deprived city inhabitants. One night Pinky drives the car in a drunken frenzy by herself and hits a child and the police convey them that no one reported the child's absence so that fortunately no auxiliary inquiry is done. Having being shamed so many times, during a trip back to his village Balram insults his grandmother and expresses the reader and the Chinese Premier that in the next eight months he proposes to kill his boss. In a certain moment, Balram resolves to escape India's 'Rooster Coop' i.e., by murdering Ashok and stealing his possessions. He then accomplishes to flee to Bangalore with his young nephew. Balram bribes the police at Bangalore in order to start his own driving service. At the end of the novel Balram justifies his actions by saying that his freedom is worth the lives of Ashok and his family and the financial success of

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his new taxi company. Adiga takes both the cities, old and new together and compares them with each other in realistic tone as,

..... Mr. Premier, that Delhi is the capital of not one but two countries-two India's. The Light and the Darkness both flow in to Delhi. Gurgaon, where Mr. Ashok lived, is the bright modern end of the city, and this place. Old Delhi is the other end. Full of things that the modern world forget all about rickshaws, old stone building and Muslims. On a Sunday thought, there is something more: if you keep pushing through the crowd that is always there, go past the men clearing the other men's ears by poking rusty metal rods into them, past the men selling small fish trapped in green bottles full of brine, past the cheap shoe market and the cheap shirt market, you come great secondhand book market Darya Ganj."(252)

Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* portrays the inconsiderate and ruthless circumstance of India in which voiceless people like Balram agonizes under the well-off. Adiga also instructs the Indian people by telling the veracity, that convicts are born and materialized due to exploitation, discrimination and prejudice in the society. But the Indian people must be self-cognizant and never permit themselves to associate with immoral and illegitimate accomplishments. India has yet to win many fights with poverty, corruption and equality. Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* is a realistic mirror of contemporary India in which one can look at another world which is still untouched or deliberately not touched by those claimants of India rising towards New Millennia and metro life of Delhi is a window from which one can estimate the state of entire nation. The novel has successfully proved that despite being a growing economy and super power on one hand, India has her inhabitants' poor still and Delhi is a small part of the nation from where one estimates the shape of entire nation.

Aravind Adiga is a remarkable Indian English novelist who has given a new dimension to Indian writing in English. Mainly his works has sketched the human predicament of Balram caused by the inner turmoil of man living in the present world. Aravind Adiga's novels talk about characters that alienate by the society physically as well as psychologically besides the quest for identity. Initially Balram roams far and wide with no permanent objective in their mind like vagabonds. The confrontations between the alienated self and the sociocultural forces are the main focus of his fictional works. Aravind Adiga's principal characters of his novels are subjected to extreme social, cultural and psychological pressures. Aravind Adiga subjects his protagonists to experience such a crisis of the modern man's life. According to the words of Stuart Hall in *Empire Writes Back* as,

The crucial concern of diasporic identity is not subjectivity but subject position, then the diasporic writer provides the prospect of a fluidity of identity, a constantly changing subject position, both geographically and ontologically. More importantly perhaps, diasporic writing, in its crossing of borders, opens up the horizons of place. The phenomenon of diaspora, with its exemplary model of dislocation and displacement (218).

Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* creatively represents the regrets, predicaments, slavery, plight, deprivation, ridicule and scarcity undergone by Balram Halwai. The life of Balram is extremely excruciating by showing their experience which is predominantly brutal in the initial stage and becomes an entrepreneur in the later part of the novel. For centuries, the voiceless communities have been at

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the bottom of India's social pyramid and denied even the most basic human rights such as access to drink water, education, freedom to walk and talk in front of the upper castes. The affliction of Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* is not the individual's tribulations but also of the entire outcast community which characterizes the exploitation, suppression and marginalization of the voiceless people by the social, economic, cultural and political domination of the upper castes.

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