

Original Article

Aravind Adiga's The White Tiger: A Tale of Neoliberal Transformation and Psychological Evolution

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In addition to critically analyzing the book The White Tiger by Indian novelist Aravind Adiga from a psychological perspective, this article parodies the ways in which neoliberalism has normalized misanthropic self-interest as the current state of human nature and society. This self-interest is a recently developed sort of rational choice that turns people into "entrepreneurs of themselves," according to Michel Foucault. These topics are controlled by the harshly instrumentalist concepts of risk, investment, and cost-benefit.

Balram Halwai, the protagonist of The White Tiger, is a self-made entrepreneur who struggles to rise from poverty to wealth against the backdrop of contemporary Indian society. The psychological analysis of Balram Halwa's persona is portrayed in this essay in exquisite detail. By making the victims of under development the architects of their own subjugation, the novel subverts the typically antagonistic role of scatological discourse by parodying this subject stance through the language of neoliberal disgust.

Keywords: Neoliberalism, Psychological, Human Nature, Society, entrepreneur, Discourse

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Introduction

These days, most writers try to capture contemporary culture and its traditions in their writing. On a range of societal issues, they share their opinions. These authors created a cast of protagonists and characters who emulate people who navigate society's social issues and problems on a daily basis. Aravind Adiga is one among the well known authors. His contentious subjects have made him well-known. The reality of Indian society is portrayed in his works. He spoke out bravely, in particular, about the brutal and dark aspects of Indian society. Through his works, he expresses the expansion, including technological and economic advancements, and the deterioration of India without purposefully placing blame on the country.

His literary debut was his first book, *The White Tiger*. For the novel, he was awarded the esteemed 40th Man Booker Prize. This society had many social problems that eventually became major ones, such as casticism, the country's dowry system, unemployment, corruption, gang rapes, terrorism, poverty, crime, illiteracy, prostitution, child abuse, gambling, discrimination, and the presence of Western organizations in India. These days, a lot of issues that plague people include existential crises, loneliness, alienation, and the quest for personal identity. Adiga reflects and portrays these tragedies in his narratives. Through his work *The White Tiger*, he portrayed a realistic civilization facing significant challenges. Moreover, he has had a major impact by offering a range of formulas that help with societal issues and problems.

Aravind Adiga is a widely recognized and fast-rising writer in the world. Alongside writers such as Charles Dickens, R.K. Narayan, and V.S. Naipaul, he is considered a great writer due to the way he has portrayed his characters, capturing every facet of society and circumstance, and for his accurate portrayal of the various forms of discrimination

that arise from class, caste, gender, religion, and politics, as well as the shifting styles that these groups adopt in today's globalized society.

In his writings, he explores the simple and complex lives of regular men. Adiga's story sheds light on the problems with injustice and discrimination in contemporary society that stem



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from the misuse of power by self-serving politicians in charge of the government apparatus. These problems include those related to caste, creed, gender, class, region, and religion.

A Tale of Neoliberal Revulsion Sentiment

Unfortunately, despite being fully enmeshed in the logic of neoliberal capitalism, digital workers on the periphery of the world are still trapped in the imperative logic of precapitalist formal subsumption processes and lack the opportunity to transition into real subsumption and its possibilities. This is especially true given that modern technologies allow for the complete capture of the soul and its material functions. Any analysis of *The White Tiger* must take into account this feature of the formal and actual subsumption of work. It goes without saying that in both of its forms, formal and actual labor subsumption the workers' souls are caught; at the periphery of the world, however, this act of capture is made possible by a sort of socially exploitative blackmail. Thus, the novel also emphasizes the cost of thinking and acting independently, particularly in terms of escaping the capitalist enslavement of the soul.

Neoliberalism is a widespread tendency that has spread to practically every nation, including those in Asia and Europe. *The White Tiger* novel contains some of its elements. Sanghavi (2018) claims that contemporary Indian literature depicts the consequences of neoliberal globalization on the lives of the underprivileged and common people in a number of ways. Numerous Indian literary works portray the positive impacts of globalization on the impoverished. India after liberalization serves as the backdrop for the epistolary work *The White Tiger*. Balram Halwai, who drives Ashok, suffers greatly as a result of his family's precarious financial condition. In the end, he succeeds as an entrepreneur and steals the money. Through the protagonist of her book *The White Tiger*, Adiga takes aim at the capitalist class, the caste system, and the privatized economic system. Situations of inequality among the populace are caused by privatization.

You should have seen me that day- what a performance of wails and kisses and tears! You'd think I'd been born into a caste of performing actors! And all the time, while clutching the Stork's feet, I was staring at his huge, dirty, uncut toenails, and thinking...Why isn't he back home, screwing poor fishermen of their money and humping their daughter? (TWT, p.51).

According to the lines, the man is dutifully carrying out duties that aren't even related to his job description. The sentences also make clear that when employees work alone, they must complete all kinds of tasks. Because of this circumstance, the protagonist is sarcastic in his letter. He must perform the duties assigned to him by his wealthy businessman boss Ashok and his father Stork, who make a lot of money by taking advantage of the weaker laborers in the village of Laxmangarh. Even though they are aware of the difficult working conditions, they continue to underpay their impoverished workers and claim that by doing so, they are providing opportunities for employment.

The idea of development which takes the form of, for example, the privatization of state-owned institutions, the lowering of import tariffs, and the construction of massive high-tech stores, office buildings, and malls in major cities are eliminated by Adiga in *The White Tiger* through the use of juxtaposition. The comparison demonstrates how caste and class division in India grew worse after independence due to the underlying spatial growth inequities of the global economic system. "I haven't been back to see the Ganga since then: I'm leaving that river for the American tourists!" (TWT, p. 18). The protagonist appears to be dissatisfied with neoliberal features such as privatization based on this statement. Certain private firms possess public spaces that they utilize for their own private enterprises, such as eateries, lodging facilities, etc.

Dramatic monologue that reveals Psychological Evolution

Aravind Adiga's writing, which is interestingly set at around midnight every day for a week, has used dramatic monologue and the epistolary approach. The protagonist discusses his upbringing in a rural area, his employment as a driver at Mr. Ashok's residence, the murder of his master, and his ascent to the position of entrepreneur with the Chinese premier, who he refers to as a "interlocutor." In order to structure his work, the author employed a dramatic monologue technique in which the Chinese listener, who never responded to the letters, is frequently addressed by the Indian protagonist. Since it is uncommon for a diplomat to be a personal confidant, the protagonist's letter to the Chinese premier seems incredibly surreal.

Balram Halwai tells the story of the entire book in letters to the Chinese Premier, who is scheduled to visit India shortly. Balram was born in Laxmangarh and comes from a low-income family. He describes his previous life in his hometown. He brags that after killing his master, he turned into a prosperous businessman and thoughtful individual. Balram was raised in a large, impoverished family in Laxmangarh, belonging to the Halwai caste, which makes sweets. The hometown's lack of amenities, possibilities, and poverty have earned it the symbolic moniker "the darkness." Conversely, the main character calls Delhi "Light," referring to its potential for social and economic advancement. A school official refers to Balram as a "white tiger" during an unexpected inspection because of his exceptional intelligence. However, Balram is compelled to leave school and work at a tea store in order to acquire a license, even though he made a vow. He observes and listens to the patrons discussing chauffeur pay, taking an interest in and learning about professional driving.

Balram looks for work by bouncing from one job to another until he finds work as the Stork family's second driver. One of the creatures that rules over Balram's community is the stork, a mafia leader. When Balram reveals that the top chauffeur is a Muslim, he ends up being the lone driver. The youngest son of the Stork, Mr. Ashok, receives him shortly after. In order to represent the interests of the Stork in New Delhi, Mr. Ashok and his American wife, Pinky Madam, are dispatched there. Balram sees Mr. Ashok's unease with the filthy family company and Pinky Madam's discontent with Indian living. Balram makes the decision that he deserves a better life. He promises to rise above life as a servant and never return to the Darkness, so he stops sending money home. He starts dressing and acting like Mr. Ashok in an attempt to shed his rural way of life. After being soaked at a party one evening, Pinky Madam tells Balram to let her drive. She horribly runs over something in the road, maybe a kid. Balram leaves for home, giving the automobile a thorough cleaning to remove any traces of the incident. When the Stork shows up, he orders Balram to write a confession and accept responsibility for the event. Balram knows that his bosses are not considering his best interests, even if no report is ever filed.

In the middle of the night, Balram finds Pinky Madam in his room, telling him to take her to the airport. She departs from Mr. Ashok and India. Balram supports his master throughout his depressive and binge-drinking days. Balram adopts new vices in the same way as Mr. Ashok. Balram chooses to overbill Mr. Ashok for gas and auto maintenance when he starts delivering bribes for his father. For the sake of the bribe, he even considers killing his employer. He is fully aware that the only things preventing him from reaching the "Light," in his opinion, are his master and family. In the end, Balram locates the tools (a broken bottle) and the location (an open road on a wet day) needed to murder his boss and steal the money. He flees and starts over in Bangalore as an entrepreneur, starting a fleet of taxis known as "White Tiger Drivers." He adopts Ashok Sharma as his new name after becoming a master in his own right. Balram conducts the theatrical monologue in *The White Tiger*, addressing the audience as though they are having a live conversation.

Balram's life instincts push him to obsess over and satiate his yearning. These innate desires prompt them to look for what they need. The powers are propelled to fulfill their requirements by this kind of instinctive motivational force. Balram has faced numerous hardships and struggles in his quest to overcome poverty and the rooster coop. Balram is an entirely unique individual. He is a unique species, much like the white tiger. To be his master, he aspires to loyalty. However, his desire to be honest with his master coexists with his mind's need to own his infatuation. The servant owes his master loyalty in accordance with social norms. However, he is tempted to become a wealthy businessman by his conscious consciousness. His fixation prevailed in the battle between these two.

Balram Halwai, the character, and his conflicted feelings toward both society and his master are explained in *The White Tiger*. The character Balram's internal monologue and ambivalence serve as explanations for his psychological fluctuations. Adiga has a thorough understanding of how India's corrupted society and prejudice against the rich and poor affect Balram's mental state. In a metaphorical sense, he is compared to a rare animal, such as the white tiger, and the corrupted civilization to a jungle. He has skillfully employed the dramatic monologue form, allowing the protagonist to openly discuss his inner turmoil about the murder—whether it was a random act of violence or a greed-driven sin for which he feels both pride and regret for leaving the rooster co-op. Furthermore, he views the murder as premeditated retaliation against Mr. Ashok's family, believing that they would kill him as a result of the crime.

Conclusion

Aravind Adiga uses an epistolary literary technique in *The White Tiger*, where the main character, Balram Halwai, writes lengthy open letters to the Chinese premier. Thus, the narrative of our protagonist sets up for us the financial and psychological consequences for an individual ensnared in this system. Naturally, Balram Halwai is the quintessential insecure worker of the capitalist digital age. Several social and economic mechanisms underpin and inscribe his precarity: first, the body's fundamental need to work in order to sustain itself; second, his need to work in order to support his family. Most significantly, though, his complete immobility makes it impossible for him to shift laterally to a better position or form any kind of lateral alliance with other employees, which makes his capture—body and soul—possible. However, the potential danger to his family is what keeps him totally rooted in his present situation, the very given of his existence. The fact that workers are still ensnared in a feudal, rural social structure and that capital is still formally subsuming them makes this threat plausible. Halwai thus realizes that given the logic of the feudal system in which they live, his family will bear the cost of his rebellion against his employers. And his family does pay a price when he makes his move, literally killing his benevolent foreign-returned lord. After his own act of wresting his own agency and launching his own "free" firm in the neoliberal capital, he escapes only with his nephew, one of the few survivors of his extended family. In light of this, the novel teaches us, among other things, that few workers in the current capitalist system have the ability to go on strike on their own and that those who do manage to escape servitude are as uncommon as White Tigers!



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