

## Psyche of a common man in Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*

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### Abstract

Nowadays, the stream of Indian fiction focuses on the human psyche rather than external conflicts. It also considers the state of individuality in the society. In the light of Indian fiction, Aravind Adiga is one of the foremost writers, who get name and fame for his controversial themes. By and large, writers speak about the development of their nations. Perhaps, Adiga explores the dark sides of India. He has no intention to blame India. He just conveys the other growth and degradation of India through his novels. Adiga's debut novel *The White Tiger* does not concern the degradation of India. It also considers the individual's psyche of a common man in this present age. The present paper has tried to exemplify the psyche of the common man of present India through the protagonist Balram as well as it considers the gradual change of his psyche from the birth till the death.

**Keywords:** Working class people, Frustration, Cheating, Loyal Servant, Psyche

### 1. Introduction

Aravind Adiga's famous novel, *The White Tiger* (2008) wins the 40<sup>th</sup> Man Booker Prize in the same year. *The White Tiger* published in so many languages and gets favorable reviews. Through this novel, Adiga intellectually mocks the dark side of India. *The White Tiger* is beginning with the narration of Balram Halwai who is known as Munna. The protagonist leads his life as a driver, loyal servant, cheater, and entrepreneur. This novel portrays the two sides of India. First is the flow of luminosity in India. It has flourished background and opulent people become more opulent. The rest of the part is deeply rooted into the shadows. Here, people do not have proper education, medical facilities and poor become poorer. They also tempted by superstition and landlords.

Balram considers two kinds of people in India. First, rich people and middle-class people are persuading their education in institutions and the rest of the section is 'half-baked' which means they do not get education properly. The upper section completed their school education and higher studies. So, they can able to be worked in the corporate company, banks or start their own business. But, the lower class which means the half-baked worked in tea stalls and motor garages as a servant like mechanics or drivers. Balram's real name is Munna. It means a boy. So his class teacher eagerly gives a name as Balram to him. The title, *The White Tiger* symbolizes protagonist Balram. "The rarest animals- the creature that comes along only once in the generation?" (35). The White Tiger is the rarest creature in the forest which has unique features. Like that Balram's vision is differing from his colleagues. Balram's intellectual provides him a title the White Tiger. As a result, he breaks out his squat position in the society and stimulates him to seek self-identity.

Anand has used to refer the economically downtrodden people or untouchable people as 'Rooster Coop'. They cannot survive without the mercy of the opulent and landlords. They are like a toy in the hands of opulent people. Contrast, Balram comes out from the 'Rooster Coop'. Balram is the voice of working class people like salt workers, coolies who work on the lands of the landlords. Balram overwhelmed the poverty and rose

against the cruelty of the moneyed people and landlords. This changes his lifestyle darkness into luminosity. Perhaps, his way of living drives himself into shadows.

"My father's father must have been a real Halwai, a sweet-maker, but when he inherited the shop, a member of some other caste must have stolen it from him with the help of the police. My father had not had the belly to fight back" (*TWT*, 63-64). Through this speech of Balram, Adiga blames opulent people. Even, in the colonial period Indian people as the slave under the British people. Sadly, after the freedom the strongest persons suppressed other people and take their wealth.

Balram's family is to be proud of him for working in the landlord's house. *The White Tiger* reveals, how a servant loyal to his master. Balram works as a driver of Mr. Ashok or Pinky. Balram's scale is fixed. In additional, he works as a cook, sometimes as a sweeper, sometimes as cleaner and sometimes as a masseur. On the other hand, he works for Mr. Ashok and pinky madam whenever they go to the city. His working hour is not defined. But, his master does not pay anything, more money to him. As a servant, he cannot judge his scale. He just brings what his master gives it. Balram wants more money to send his granny Kusum. But, he wants to be a loyal servant of his master. So, he has no courage to ask more money from his master. Balram leads hell like life in his master's home. Perhaps, his family members think that Balram leads a good life in the home of Mr. Ashok.

Sadly, moneyless people also lose their voting rights. Few people sell their votes to the political parties for the money. People do not have the apt knowledge to judge the right person to elect as a politician. The upper class forced them to take their voting right. As a common man, Balram cannot act with his own wish. "We have left the village, but the masters still own us, body, soul, and arse" (*TWT*, 169). This word declares the depth of his sufferings under his master. Balram also suffered by the caste system while he works in his master's house. In the second chapter named *Second Night* Ram Prasad, who is one of the drivers in Stork's house mocks as, "The rich except their dogs to be treated like humans, you see – they expect their dogs to be pampered, and walked, and

petted, and even washed!" (TWT, 78).

These words hurt much of Balram. In addition, Balram's younger master Ashok's wife drives with drink and kills a child. His masters force him to accept the responsibility for the accident. Balram's master tries to tempt the mind of him. Balram feels that he is caught as a chicken in the cage. He wants to escape from that cage, but he cannot. Eventually, he accepts the condition of his master and goes to the prison. On the other hand, Ashok beats Balram since he drops his master's wife at the airport. But, it is not the mistake of Balram. As a servant, he does what she says. Ashok pulls Balram to the edge of the balcony and tried to kill him. As an employer, Balram is very loyal to his masters. But, the chain of suppressing by his master makes him take avenger against his master. These incidents turn his psyche from a loyal servant to a murderer.

"... I'll never say I made a mistake that night in Delhi when I slit my master's throat" (TWT, 320). Balram does not consider himself as a murderer instead of that he focuses the empowerment against his master as well as he considers the money only. Here, Adiga explores how the humanity is gradually faded away from the heart of people in this present society. After the death of his, master Balram escapes from Delhi and moves to the south side of India. He bribes the police whom his master used to bribe the police and ministers. So, he escapes from the murder. Balram wants to take revenge against his master for break the Rooster Coop. But it affects his family. The police search him. But he now makes a new identity as a businessman and the owner of Car Company. Balram proudly says about himself as: "There – I'm revealing the secret to a successful escape. The police searched for me in the darkness: but I hid myself in light" (TWT, 118).

At the end of the novel, Balram reaches his ambition. But, his path starts from the lightness and ends in the shadows. Because at the end, he cheated his own master and becomes a rich man. There is a slight difference between the landlords and Balram. Balram cheats rich people, but landlords cheat poor people. Through this novel, Adiga explores how the humanity is gradually faded away from the heart of people in this present society. After the death of his master, he never returns to his village. He is the best example of the present day human being. He focuses on his desires and growth only. He does not consider his family.

Balram's surrounding and his unrevealed anger stimulates himself to cheat his master and makes him as a murderer. Balram words capture the consequent changes that make in the life and aims of the individuals. Balram takes a right decision; perhaps his way of chasing is too wrong. Instead of that, he has no guilt and cleverly veils his wrong. He says, "I had to do something different; don't you see? I can't live the way of the Wild Boar and the Buffalo and the Raven lived, and probably still live, back in Laxmangarh. I am in the Light now" (TWT, 313).

Balram's words state that he just has the wealth like the landlords. Perhaps, he does not live like them to suppress his workers. The foremost psychiatrist J.B. Watson says, "Give me a dozen healthy babies; I can make any one of them as a theologian or criminal as you want; no matter what so ever is its heredity" (PLHD, 4). Thus, the surrounding plays a vital role in human being's life. From the childhood to the present age, Balram views how his people are treated by the landlords and moneylenders. He also suffered from the poverty and the

suppression of opulent people. If Balram gets punishment for his treachery it will be given adorn to the novel. Even, Adiga cleverly reveals the state every individual in the present society via Balram. But, Adiga does not consider the poetic justice in his novel he simply reflects the present society in this his novel.

## 2. References

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