

Exploration of Enriching Diversity and Societal Veracity in Modern India in the Novel 'The White Tiger'

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Abstract

This research paper is about the cultural diversity in the novel 'The White Tiger' by Arvind Adiga. India is characterized by a rich diversity, encompassing a wide range of languages, dialects, social groups, castes, and cultures. It offers a captivating exploration of the varied cultural backgrounds and social dynamics present in modern-day India. The novel vividly portrays the stark contrasts between rural and urban life, as well as the multifaceted dynamics of caste and class in Indian society. The author presents a scathing and disparaging portrayal of Indian society, using this literary work as a platform to address the pervasive issue of social inequality in the country. The novel delves into the social aspirations of an ambitious yet impoverished youth, illuminating his relentless struggle to ascend to the upper echelons of society without ethical constraints. The novel prompts readers to contemplate the complex dynamics of Indian society and the pursuit of personal autonomy amidst its intricate mix of social conventions and economic inequalities. Adiga portrays the experiences of a protagonist born into a lower social class, navigating the complexities of regional politics and governance, all while providing insights into the socio-political and cultural landscape of contemporary India.

Keywords: socio-political, socio-cultural, struggle, ethical and constraints.

"The White Tiger," authored by Arvind Adiga, vividly portrays the harsh truths of societal hierarchy and the relentless quest for advancement in contemporary India. Through the lens of its protagonist, Balram Halwai, the novel delves into the intricacies of social class divisions, corruption, and aspirations amidst a rapidly transforming milieu. Against the backdrop of India's economic surge, Balram's odyssey from a humble village to the bustling urban landscape of Delhi lays bare the glaring chasm between affluence and poverty. The title, "The White Tiger," serves as a metaphor for Balram's metamorphosis from a subservient figure to a shrewd opportunist adept at navigating the competitive realm of business. Adiga's penetrating portrayal of power dynamics and the harsh realities endured by the marginalized provides a poignant critique of the shadowy facets of India's economic development. "The White Tiger" emerges as a compelling examination of the complexities surrounding ambition and ethics within a society undergoing profound social metamorphosis.

India, renowned for its vast cultural legacy and diverse traditions, presents a rich tapestry of customs that have flourished through the ages. From the vibrant

celebrations of festivals such as Diwali and Holi to the tranquil ambiance of ancient temple meditations, every facet of Indian culture reverberates with vitality and profundity. The social fabric of India is intricately interwoven with elements of heritage, spirituality, and communal accord. Whether relishing the tantalizing flavors of Indian cuisine or admiring the exquisite artistry of classical dance forms like Bharatanatyam and Kathak, one cannot help but be entranced by the extensive spectrum of Indian cultural expressions. It is a mosaic comprising various languages, faiths, and traditions, each contributing to the kaleidoscope of experiences that characterize this remarkable nation. India's cultural panorama serves not merely as a testament to its history but also as a dynamic and inspiring force that continues to evolve and captivate generations worldwide.

The concept of caste had been deeply ingrained in Indian consciousness from its introduction in the Vedic texts. India is more diverse due to the multitude of caste and religious beliefs, which further divides and stratifies the country's society. The caste theories arrange people in social classes according to the merits of their birth alone. The disadvantaged groups within the lower caste people

are then further pushed into the helplessness hierarchy. The lives of these marginalised groups are frequently hidden beneath the widely projected picture of India's prosperity. Despite the fact that the nation has adopted several programmes and policies aimed at alleviating hunger, poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment among the oppressed, it has not entirely abandoned the poorer segments of society in its pursuit of growth.

The well-being of these homeless persons sleeping on the pavements is still unknown given the current anarchic situation in the nation. The crooked and broken system in this place allows their lives to exist as a mockery of the numerous policies that the Indian government has put in place. Furthermore, the country is a complex maze due to the widespread corruption and lawlessness, as well as the caste beliefs is based on myths. The main themes of Adiga's *The White Tiger* are the Darwinian battle and the existential sorrow of the locals. Major changes in Indian society's perspective and polity have been embraced and expressed as a result of globalisation.

The class structure becomes more prominent as old religion and caste ideals progressively erode, creating a scenario in which power and money determine one's social standing. The wealthier a person becomes the more respected and influential they become in society, creating an environment of economic tension that affects both the community and its members. Adiga tries to highlight the difficult lives of the impoverished in India as they become entangled in the confusion of the nation's power structure by projecting the opposing images of the two Indias and giving influence to a stature taken from the hushed India. By include examples of caste and class, the author effectively captures India's hierarchically divided society. The author notes that the nation is still in an oppressive colonial status in the twenty-first century, which he primarily attributes to the country's use of a class political system.

Adiga expresses concerns about India's class system, suggesting that it could lead to a rebellion among the lower classes, by positioning characters at various unconventional levels within the class hierarchy. Balram, who is born into a lowly status and leads a relatively insignificant life within India's stratified society, harbors aspirations for material wealth and social status. Despite

his humble origins as a low-class servant, Balram yearns for prestige and a respected place in society, reflecting on his desire for glory and upward social mobility.

He feels the urge to rebel against the unsettling images of injustice and inequity that are emerging in his society. He turns to confronting the current brutal world in a same manner to how he was unsuccessful the Black Fort, which served as a disturbing reminder of his race's historical enslavement. Halwai writes seven epistles to Wen Jiabao, the main focus of which is the ignored lives of the oppressed. In the narrative, Halwai breaks free from the bonds of his past, family, and identity by rising to the top of the heap and finally becoming a part of the corrupted system.

As a man of action and change, Balram Halwai fights injustice in a Marxian manner, yet the path he ultimately takes is ironically the usual one of crime and corruption. In an attempt to fit in with the social class, he cultivates a criminal mindset and a money fixation. The main character Balram Halwai and conductor Vijay struggle to succeed as they absorb the notion that money is power. Balram climbs to prominence by adopting the economic system and manner of life of his culture as models. He does this by shedding his caste identity—the Halwai surname and his past of servitude—and assuming the persona of Ashok Sharma, a well-respected businessman.

Even though he believes he has achieved his objective of money and social achievement in his older years, he still feels unfulfilled. Referring to himself as a "first-gear man" who perceives "tomorrow" when others perceive "today," he intends to hand over control of his start-up to another businessman and enter the real estate market before opening a school where students will not be influenced by Gandhian tales. Halwai carved out a path for himself to escape the "rooster coop" due to his unquenchable thirst for success.

After examining the culture, how it operates, and the current system, he comes to the conclusion that India's political structure allows anybody to succeed by eluding the law. Halwai chooses to climb the ladder to prosperity after seeing conductor Vijay as his best example and role model. He internalises the notion that money is power. Balram breaks free from the bonds of ideology and tales of slavery by ascent to power and establishing himself as a

socially respected businessman. Halwai discovers that the idea of an India freed from oppression is really a fantasy. He refers to it as a lawless jungle and compares its socio-cultural structure to a rooster coop.

Adiga suggests that the country's socio-cultural structure is primarily responsible for the repressive colonial state by presenting the class polity as a significant social catastrophe. One significant event in the book that significantly alters Halwai's conduct style is the landlord's decision to assign him the Pinky Madam hit-and-run case, with his grandma Kusum's approval. Balram grows resentful of Mr. Ashok because he believes that, due to his apathy towards the servant, he too has the landlord type. This incident also reveals Mr. Ashok's hypocritical attitude. This makes a significant shift in the story, even though the aspect of realism in this case is dubious because Ashok's portrayal might appear to be the writer's intentional attempt to reach his climax. Additionally, the inclusion of the "idealised" Kusum in the scenario compels Halwai, the main character, to reflect on his people's state of servitude before taking action to bring about change. Because Balram intends to elevate his own social standing and prestige rather than enact radical social change in the community.

Studying the culture he lived in led to the development of an unquenchable desire in him for a higher social status. Halwai recognises the degree of the social conditioning the affluent have applied to him as he mulls over his life of slavery. Halwai believes they are like animals, so conditioned to follow their masters without question.

Through social upbringing, homeowners hegemonically impose control over the daily lives of the impoverished. The taught servants see their enslavement as a chance to show their allegiance to their masters since they are unable to recognise the cunning of the privileged. They own not just their bodies but also their souls and lives, in the words of Balram Halwai. As he works as the landowners' chauffeur and the hypocrisies of society become apparent to him, he develops his own moral code and worldview. Halwai breaks free from the oppressive institutions and social and religious philosophies. The heterogeneous nature of the society Balram Halwai lives in has led to an anomic change in his character. Halwai views

his society as an ordered structure based on money, adopting a Marxian perspective. Halwai's voice is resonant with the distinctions of rich-poor, masterservant, and darkness and light.

By bringing about the change in power in his life, he roars his way to the top of society, much like a white tiger unable to endure its captivity. After seeing lawlessness and learning from the "successful" people in his environment, he decides that thievery and betrayal are the quickest routes to success. Halwai takes the dishonest Conductor Vijay, the vicious landlords, and the dishonest politicians as his archetypes. Balram experiences anomic tension as he observes incidences of law violation in his encirclement and the beneficial outcomes that follow.

He progressively absorbs a dehumanising image of the law and order system as he witnesses the cunning elite easily slipping out of it. He thinks it's funny that the values and strictness of the law are being used strategically. Halwai's infatuation with chandeliers betrays his intense discontent with the impoverished conditions of his homeland and the cruel life its citizens face. By comparing the smell of the wealthy life with his own body odour, he reveals the stench of slavery and gloom. Adiga takes a strong stance against the money fetishism and ensuing anarchy of contemporary society by setting his protagonists and society.

Adiga's work looks to be a significant work of social critique at a time when tales of corruption, money frauds, and other crimes are coming to light every year and individuals from all walks of life are being found guilty. According to Balram Halwai's portrayal of India, the country's cities are corrupt and its rural areas are oppressive. Adiga tries to visualise a darker aspect of India, mostly by eschewing the heavily shown, well-lit part of the country in an effort to reveal the less-considered, darker side of the frontier. Adiga depicts a society that is accepting of all social behaviours in his critique of the Indian class structure. He depicts a society that says it offers everyone equal opportunities. Halwai changes his destiny after realising that riches and money are symbols of power and social standing, respectively. Through his personal experiences in India, he grows from a village idiot to a social entrepreneur and ultimately a significant commercial entrepreneur. In a Marxian manner, Halwai

attempts to bring about a change in his society because he views himself as a "thinking man," "a white tiger," and "the rarest of animals—the creature that comes along only once in a generation" (Adiga, 35).

However, via betrayal and murder, he integrates himself into the society he is trying to reform by taking on the persona of an upper-caste and upper-class person. As a result, the researcher concludes that Balram Halwai is motivated to go up the social hierarchy by selecting the path that he believes is most practical for him because of the subsequent anomic conduct in him. As a result, he turns to the illegal act of eliminating his purported master, who serves as his direct obstacle to achievement. Halwai had to forgo his previous identity in order to carve out a path for himself out of the "rooster coop" due to his unquenchable thirst for success and advancement.

This book is a reflection of its society, which is divided into two opposing Indias. The main character's departure from his assigned status represents a rebellion against the affluent and imperialist India, which is an alien civilization to him. Even though Balram Halwai is a native of liberated postcolonial India, he believes that the freedom that India purports to provide for its people is just surface-level. He draws attention to the differences between the undertake state of India throughout its journey towards liberation and its current status by using the picture of Gandhi as the background.

According to the research, Halwai's anti-ideological disobedience which led to the murder of his master and likely the landlords' execution of his entire family, was a direct result of the social upbringing that society applied to him in an effort to shape him into the ideal servant class member. His bizarre actions are an attempt by his troubled psyche to rebel against the colonial identities that still control postcolonial India. According to Halwai, the liberty in India is only a mirage; the country itself resembles a rooster coop. He finds it hard to understand the widely held belief that democracy exists in a free India. The White Tiger is a powerful allegory for India's darker truths, which the nation frequently tries to conceal. Enticed by its development, prosperity, and expansion, the nation often overlooks its less attractive exterior. Through his text, Adiga expresses his concern about this dark side of India.

He wonders how long the nation will be able to hide its darker side. Adiga warns the nation of the impending rebellion, which is expected to break out at any time, by bringing in a man with guts and a strong voice. Adiga paints a horrifying depiction of the terrifying life of the dark via his art. He exposes the reader to India's limited yet unbridled sociocultural and political landscape. The main underlying topics of the work are the enormous gap between the affluent and the poor and the potential peril he warns the nation about.

A significant portion of this novel casts doubt on democracy itself by blaming corruption on the social and political fronts in democratic India. The author makes an audacious attempt to expose the crooked and twisted political system that the nation continues to cling to. The book, with its criminal anti-hero, is a scream for the impending revolt that the nation would probably experience from the lower classes. The country has devolved into a lawless jungle where the only people who survive are those with large stomachs due to the current class and caste division and the ensuing power struggle.

The novelist had deftly drawn a parody of India's politically tainted democratic system. The text's main areas of focus include almost all of the components that are visible on the every fronts of the nation, such as the caste and class divides and the social hierarchy. Furthermore, the text explores the concept of association, the structure of Indian families, the elaborate marriage rituals accompanied by substantial dowries, the role of women within the family, and the dominance of males as the primary providers, especially in rural northern India. Adiga illustrates the disparity between the wealthy and the impoverished in the Indian village juxtaposed with urban life through the contrast of traditional customs and modernity.

This work specifically focuses on the two opposing sides of the nation—what Balram Halwai refers to as its "dark and light." According to the study, This novel is a critique on the probable dangers and frequently concealed oddities of the Indian socio-cultural system. The researcher claims to have done so after analysing the author's selection of the primary themes and topics covered in the book. The text's usage of the first-person narrative is also taken into account when determining the conclusion.

The author depicts India through the perspective of Balram Halwai, a lower-class individual, offering a nativist portrayal of the country. The researcher focuses their study on the social aspects of the literary work, using the concept of anomie as a starting point. The novel addresses various socio-cultural concerns such as caste and socioeconomic disparities, familial and communal structures, and widespread corruption in India's socio-political landscape. Choosing the sociological theory of anomie as the research methodology, the researcher examines the protagonist's behavior, social rebellion, as well as the actions and inclinations of minor characters. Through this analysis, they find that the concept of anomie is instrumental in interpreting the text's themes and messages.

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