

A Journey from Darkness to Light in Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*

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Abstract

An outstanding author of human predicament, Aravind Adiga is ranked with the great masters of contemporary Indian fiction in English. His novel The White Tiger is situated in the grim reality of Indians and the socio-cultural and economic realities of rural areas. He paints a beautiful picture of the Indians' deplorable predicament. The protagonist of the novel, Balram, talks with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao about the gloomy realities that encircled the impoverished in India and in general. He describes the protagonist's desire and drive to overcome such obstacles in his environment. The protagonist does not dwell in the horrible experience of his past life rather devices new avenues to overcome.

Keywords: Poverty, Education, Corruption, Pollution

Introduction

India has produced a number of literary giants, who have made significant contributions to the development of Indian literature in English. Through his acclaimed novel *The White Tiger*, which received the Man Booker Prize in 2008, Aravind Adiga adds another feather to India's literary study. He was born in India and has travelled extensively throughout the world, so he has a wealth of experience and does not overlook the plight of India's regular poor. He also elucidates the paradox in India's difficulties, in which the rich get richer while the poor get impoverished. The novel *The White Tiger* depicts an incredibly difficult task as well as a glance into the various problems that India faces in terms of social issues and men and women's global development. *The White Tiger* reveals that inequality made by the hierarchy. India is known as 'Shining India' 'Incredible India' 'Rising India' 'the future Super power' and 'the fastest growing country in the world'. On the other hand corruption is increasing in our country.

Balram Halwai, the protagonist, is a dark-skinned guy who dreams of being self-sufficient. Balram's dreams were joined by his father's dream, which he had glimpsed for his son. The story follows Balram on his journey from darkness to light, from Laxmangarth through Delhi, and finally to Bangalore. In this work, Balram is shown as a low-caste, ostracized, dehumanized, and oppressed individual. When the school inspector praises him for his brilliance, he imagines himself as a white

tiger, which he associates with tremendous power. It was the first turning point in his life because it moved him to stand up above the servitude mindset, which was created by colonization. This demonstrates that decolonization mindset stabbed the grassroots and highlighted the need to pass from darkness to light, and poverty to richness.

The author pictures the suffering of the bonded labourers especially the members of Balram's family under the four Landlords, who have animal attributes and own almost everything and they construct laborers' life depressed due to their heavy debts. The Landlords also chained the Balram's family through the payment of heavy debts. In spite of all the struggles Balram's father had a dream to educate his son. His dream was initially not fulfilled, though Balram is an intelligent but was forced to quit the school and work at tea stall. His work in the teashop indicates the continuation of slavery system in India.

Despite his intelligence, Balram was obliged to drop out of school and work at a tea shop. His labor at the teashop exemplifies India's enduring slavery system. Balram, while being forced to labor in a servile manner, had a spark of a fire in his heart and head to drive him forward in life. Education was one of the most effective techniques of assisting him in his ascension. When the school inspector arrived, he offered to study because Balram had given the correct response. So inspector said "I will write to Patna asking them to send you a scholarship. You need to go to a real school – somewhere far away from here. You need a real uniform and a real education" (38). The author places a greater emphasis on knowing English at the start of the story. "Neither you nor I can speak English, but there are some things that can be said only in English"(03). Balram, a firm believer in education, writes letters to Chinese Premier. Although the British departed our nation in 1947, we have prioritized the English language. Balram, on the other hand, was unable to obtain a thorough education and speaks only English words. He was apprehensive, however, that educational institutions were not up to par. Also, educated individuals are afraid to express questions in front of a corrupt system since teachers take money from government schools' meals and programmes. *The White Tiger* while talking about in this book entitled the "The depiction of real India in Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*" says that:

Education is the only tool that can empower suppressed people socially politically and economically. But the kind of education that has been given especially in the government schools that too in the rural area is very bad and useless. The schools are without basic amenities such as drinking water, toilets and proper learning materials

etc. to mention the teachers have to be role models to the students and a good value to the students for their better future. Nobody is worried about this bad condition of school and education. The higher officials do not take any action because they get bribe. (Rajasha,114)

Adiga brings up the topic of schooling. In India, the English language is vital for more than just social prestige. However, it is in demand in our lives. This is a truth that we cannot refute. Balram is a well-known individual who has gained valuable life experience.

Adiga continues to expose the terrible truths that exist in India. He expresses himself by way of Balram Halwai, the protagonist, advises the Chinese Premier not to dive into the Ganga due to the darkness. People in India believe the Ganga to be a sacred river; nevertheless, the river today appears to be full with dead bodies, and it appears that industrial waste has been purposefully dumped into the river. Adiga handles Ganga humorously as Mother Ganga, but then states, “Everywhere this river flows, that area is the darkness” (15).

The author continuously condemns the corrupted politicians and ministers of India. Who are maintaining their black money in Swiss bank accounts. The novelist calls the people of Europe as in nature, since the white people possess the black money of Indian politicians. Although the people of India are proud about their glorious democracy, yet it is painful to know that their basic right of exercising the franchise has been bought by the rich. As a result, the ordinary people continue to live in perpetual suffering. The shocking reality of the Indian society is that the hardcore criminals and rich occupy the position and enjoy all the privileges. In order to validate the above said argument the novelist further echoes his ideas in the following:

You see, as total of ninety three criminal cases – for murder, rape, grand larceny, gun-smuggling, pimping, and many other such minor offences-are pending against the Great Socialist and his masters at the present moment. Not easy to get convictions when the judges are judging in Darkness, yet three convictions have been delivered, and three of the ministers are currently in jail, but continue to be ministers. The Great Socialist himself is said to have embezzled one billion rupees from the Darkness, and transferred that money into a bank account in a small, beautiful country in Europe full of White people and black money (97-98)

Balram, who was worked at a teashop, learned that the drivers' salaries are more than his, so he decided to pursue a career as a driver, where he will earn Rs 1700 a month. The courageous are thought to have a better future. Similarly, Stork hired Balram, a big man, to be a driver for his son, Mr. Ashok, who had recently returned from America. When he moves to Delhi with Mr. Ashok, his ambition to climb the social ladder becomes a reality. He realises that impoverished city drivers acquire and utilize a variety of methods and means to cheat and scam their employers since he is familiar with city life. They follow in the footsteps of their masters. They emulate their masters when it comes to lying and stealing. Balram engages in corrupted acts in order to earn financial benefit. Because of his master's immoral behaviour, he became involved in the use of alcoholic beverages and prostitution. Balram, on the other hand, learns how to live in today's world with the help of his wise master. He admits that his master Ashok was a despicable guy, and that he partakes in drunkenness, depravity, and wickedness as a result.

The bleak reality that unfolded in Balram's life spread throughout India, affecting every impoverished individual. Malnutrition, for example, has been a problem for the impoverished. This is an issue that affects more than 80% of school-aged youngsters. On the one side, we have a significant number of impoverished people, landless labourers, who are unable to purchase nutritious food. Kiran Mathew and T.T.Thomas say in their article "Creative Destruction in Aravind Adiga's Tale of Globalization" "India having 40% percent of the children under the age of 5 suffering from malnutrition" (245). Adiga goes on to say in his novel that unfair income distribution has created a divide between the affluent and the poor, demeaning the lives of the impoverished.

I am talking of a place in India, at least a third of the country, a fertile place full of rice fields and wheat fields and ponds in the middle of those fields choked with lotuses and water lilies and water buffaloes wading through ponds and chewing on the lotuses and lilies. Those who live in this place call it the darkness "please understand your Excellency", that India is two countries in one: an India of light, and an India of darkness. (14)

The writer has also addressed the struggle of the impoverished who have relocated from countryside to city in the hopes of fulfilling their ambitions of becoming wealthy. Unfortunately, their optimism turns out to be agony, and their situation continues to deteriorate day by day. It's hilarious to see the writer show the contradiction that exists between the haves and have-nots by

bringing out the truth of the destitute finding rest by the side of the road while the wealthy find rest in large houses. Thousands of people in Delhi live by the side of the road (119).

Conclusion

Adiga captures the true existence of gloom that surrounds the people of India, particularly the destitute, in his novel *The White Tiger*. He paints a realistic picture of the terrible predicament of the governing affluent, who enslave the common people, and how they systematically try to deny the poor their basic and legal rights. He goes on to describe how democracy has been threatened, putting regular folks' safety and security in jeopardy. He addresses the problems of poverty, unemployment, starvation, lack of education, pollution, and the right to vote, among other things. He warns against the dangers of negative examples from the wealthy and governing classes, which have resulted in serious repercussions, including the inevitable engagement of ordinary people in immoral acts. As a result, he wishes for the destruction of all evil forces in India, as well as the protection of every citizen's rights and the ability to live independently. via the protagonist of the storey.

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