

The Identity of the Subaltern Class in Adiga's *The White Tiger*

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Abstract: *The White Tiger*, which was first published in 2008, is the debut novel by Adiga in Indian literature. It reveals the two faces of an Indian society: “an India of light and an India of darkness”, with the main theme portraying the contrast between India’s rise as a modern global economy and its working or subaltern class, who live in crushing poverty. To unravel the subaltern class’ identity in Adiga’s *The White Tiger* from the perspective of a postcolonial dialectics, this study focuses on analyzing how the image of the subaltern class is portrayed in Adiga’s Indian society. It also seeks to unravel the nature of this class, its identity and the causes of its emergence, its persecution, its voiceless and its backlash.

Key words: Indian, darkness, subaltern class, identity, poverty, Ashok, Balram, caste

1. Introduction

Aravind Adiga, who is an Indian writer and journalist, won the 2008 Man Booker Prize with his novel, "*The White Tiger*". First published in 2008, the novel reveals a picture of a post-independent India, a theme of which is prevalent throughout the entirety of the book. It illuminates the fact that society was in a state of disorder when the British colony unraveled. As Subham observes, Adiga demonstrates different themes like poverty, corruption, self-determination and life struggle in this novel but [its] charm is created by [Adiga's] artful juxtaposition and presentation of the opposite kind of things" (2020: 39). It additionally develops the two faces of an Indian society: "an India of Light and an India of Darkness" (Adiga 2018: 12), which were concretely shown as "On one hand he shows the poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy and "darkness" of the interior India and on the other hand he presents the India in light, the affluence and a promising market open for globalization" (Subham 2020: 39). In other words, its main theme portrays the contrast between India's rise as a modern global economy and its working or subaltern class or the poorest of the poor who live in crushing poverty.

The novel is centered on Balram Halwai, the main protagonist with a typical voice of the subaltern class metaphorically described as "Rooster coop" (Adiga 2018: 166). He is endeavoring to free himself from age-old slavery and exploitation. Due to the fact that Balram had to leave school for work to support his family, he gradually "climbed the ladder of the society only to [be] a successful entrepreneur at Bangalore; and his struggle in life and the experience that he gained makes up the basic skeleton of the narrative of the story. The whole story revolves around

him, his poverty, how he came to the connection of rich people and finally became rich himself” (Subham 2020: 39).

Bailey (2020) argues that “a key movement in postcolonial studies was the 1980 intervention of the subaltern studies group”. Within “subaltern studies,” a term by Ranajit Guha, the word “subaltern” stands as “a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society.” Furthermore, as Ranajit acknowledges, “subaltern” is seen to play a dominant role which incorporates the entire people who are dependent in the sense of class, caste, age, gender, social position, etc. (1988: 35). Additionally, the word “subaltern” continues to be defined as “of inferior rank” in the *Oxford Dictionary*. Bailey (2020) also reveals that subaltern studies analyzes the “binary relationship” of the subaltern and ruling classes, which India is the most notably case. In other words, by describing Balram’s life, Adiga is showing how the subaltern class interplays with the ruling one in the contemporary Indian society. In the scope of this article, the word “subaltern” refers to the lowest class or the poorest of the poor.

Moreover, the subordination or subalternity is caused by the ideology of the subject position. This controlling ideology is more bounded by psychological than physical. No matter how successful the subaltern class are, they still feel that they are inferior and defeated by their subject positions. They are the ones who helplessly suffer and have no representatives or spokesperson to protect themselves in their society. They also get minor place or even no place in the history culture as well as history of which they are the real human. Their “identity” can be termed by Fearon James as “social [and] personal”(1999: 2). In terms of “social”, an “identity” refers simply to a social category, a set of persons

marked by a label and distinguished by rules deciding membership and (alleged) characteristic features or attributes. In terms of “personal”, an identity is “some distinguishing characteristic (or characteristics) that a person takes a special pride in or views as socially consequential but more-or-less unchangeable.”

In an attempt to better interpret the novel, this paper will try to explore how the image of the subaltern class is portrayed in Adiga's Indian society. It also seeks to unravel the nature of this class, its identity and the causes of its emergence together with the ways of its subjection and articulation as well as the reaction against it. The article, therefore, consists of four sections: the introduction on page 1, the image of the subaltern class in Adiga's Indian society on page 4, the nature of the subaltern class, its identity, the causes of its emergence together with the ways of its subjection and articulation as well as reaction against it in Adiga's Indian society on page 10, and finally, the conclusion on page 16.

2. The image of the subaltern class in Adiga's Indian society

It can be seen that Balram Halwai, a son of a rickshaw puller (Adiga 2018: 10), tries his best to become a successful entrepreneur. The transformation from Munna, which means boy (Adiga 2018: 10) to Balram Halwai, to becoming the White Tiger and eventually Ashok Sharma, is a desire for the rise of the subaltern or the subaltern class. Balram can be interpreted as the representative of the marginal farmers, landless laborers, poor taxi drivers, servants, prostitutes, beggars and

in short, an unprivileged persona. It can be inferred that the subaltern class is formed by the polity, bureaucratic set-up, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, caste and culture conflict, superstitions, social taboos, dowry practice, economic disparity, Zamindari system, corrupt education system, poor health services and police and judicial working. These forces constitute the formation of subaltern class, and help form the dark side of India.

Reading *The White Tiger*, audience have chances to observe the letters written to the Chinese Premier. Why does Balram choose this character to write his letters to? It seems he does so because he thinks that “the future of the world lies with the yellow man and the brown man now that our erstwhile matter, the White skinned man has wasted himself through buggery, mobile phone usage and drug abuse” (Adiga 2018: 4). In other words, the identity of class is emerging in the contemporary society. Moreover, the fact that the Premier officially comes to Bangalore signifies the Chinese covetous glance on India. Indian entrepreneurial success is explained as: “My country is the kind where it pays to play it both ways: the Indian entrepreneur has to be straight and crooked, mocking and believing, sly and sincere, at the same time” (Adiga 2018: 6). Furthermore, the author humbly predicts that: “In twenty years’ time, it will be just us yellow man and brown man at the top of the pyramid, and we will rule the whole world” (Adiga 2018: 262). Ashok, Balram’s previous employer, also observes India’s development: “things have changed so much in India. There are so many more things I could do here than in New York...the way things are changing in India now, this place is going to be like America in ten years” (Adiga 2018: 76-77). It can be observed that this is one of the places where the voice of

Dark India - the subaltern class - is raised. In other words, Adiga tries to balance his society between the “Big Bellies and the Small Bellies” (Adiga 2018: 54), which create justice and fairness in society. Although India claims of a booming economy, it occurs to the researcher that *The White Tiger* pictures an India which is not shining and is still “near-heart of darkness.” This is due to aspects such as: political culture of India, voting behavior, criminal, social milieu, caste and culture conflict, superstition, exploitation of subaltern class. The most attractive and ridiculous impression of *The White Tiger* is Balram Halwai’s successful life as a famous and rich entrepreneur by only his tricks.

In addition, as Adiga observes, the political system and bureaucratic set-up remain in the “rottenness and corruption” (Adiga 2018: 41) in society, which prevents the social development and welfare system and restricts half of India reaching its certain progress. Most of the politicians are “half-baked. That’s the whole tragedy of this country” (Adiga 2018: 8). It means that politics is the key problem the articulation of the whole society which Mukesh and Ashok can be interpreted as a vivid example related to the settling income tax accounts. Among those terrible messes, election can be the worst. It is the place where the political and social power are changeable among the upper class while the subaltern fate continues to remain unchanged.

Another predominant factor that affects the country is the three main out of control diseases, known as “Typhoid, Cholera and election fever” (Adiga 2018). The author also adds that: “Like eunuchs discussing the *Kama Sutra*, the voters discuss the election in Laxmangarh” (Adiga 2018: 82). As observed, the elite or the ruling class are using their money, muscle power, police, strategic alignment of various factions and power

to woo the subaltern class and ensure victory in their political game. It is why Balram confesses: “I am India’s most faithful voter, and I still have not seen the inside of a voting booth” (Adiga 2018: 86). Adiga observes that they are lagging behind China because of “this fucked-up system called parliamentary democracy. Otherwise, we’d be just like China” (Adiga 2018: 132). The current unjust system has resulted in the new distinctions and classes among its society. It can be observed that “there were a thousand castes and destinies in India” (Adiga 2018: 54) before, but there are only two castes in Adiga’s description now: “Men with Big Bellies, and Men with Small Bellies. And only two destinies: eat-or get eaten up”(Adiga 2018: 54). After independence, “the fifteen of August, 1947” (Adiga 2018: 54) the British left - the cages had been let open; and the “animals” (metaphorically used for politicians) had attacked and ripped each other apart. “Those that were the most ferocious, the hungriest, had eaten everyone else up, and grown big bellies. That was all that counted now, the size of your bellies. It did not “matter whether you were a woman, or a Muslim, or an untouchable- anyone with a belly could rise up”(Adiga 2018). The corrupt political system in India is also criticized by Desai, who states: “Not one truthful politician in the whole country. Yes, our parliament is made of thieves, each one answerable to the Prime Minister, who is the biggest thief of them all” (Desai 1998: 20). In *The Inheritance of Loss*, she also blames: “This state making, the biggest mistake that fool Nehru made. Under his rules any group of idiots can stand up demanding a new state and get it, too...it all started with Sikkim. The Neps played such a dirty trick and began to get grand ideas- now they think they can do the same thing again” (Desai 2006: 128). Desai argues that “the partition of India” comes from the wrong

policies of the Indian Government, which she calls the “first heart-attack to our country...that has never been healed” (Desai 2006: 129).

It can be observed that the author is successful in providing detailed accounts of Indian society, discussing both rural and urban lifestyles with their various facets. Bangalore, Delhi, Dhanbad, Gaya, and Laxamangarh are generic and can be seen as a representation for the portrait of India, whereas the economic disparity, poverty, unemployment, caste and culture conflict, dowry practice, illiteracy, Zamindari system, landless farmers, favoritism among class relationship contribute to the basic structure of the subaltern class in the contemporary Indian society.

It can be withdrawn in *The White Tiger* that Adiga is successful in picturing contemporary India's lowest class or the poorest of the poor, demonstrating the hardships they face on a daily basis. They are urgent in their quest for food, shelter, and above all for their freedom. Naipaul also unveils the Darkness of India in his *Area of Darkness*: “rigid caste distinction” (1995: 53), “English mimicry” (1995: 55), “Indian lavatory and kitchens—the visitors’ nightmare” (1995: 58), “clubs of Bombay and Delhi... poverty” (1995: 62-66), “misfortunes of refugee family” (1995: 68), underclass denied of opportunities; lack of hygiene and sense of sanitation: “Indians defecate everywhere” (1995: 70), “labor is a degradation” (1995: 73), businessman: “all his duty is, by whatever means, to make money” (1995: 77), “symbolic actions” (1995:80), irrational “reservation policy [which] places responsibility in the hands of the unqualified”(1995: 82).

It can be clearly understood that the darkness of rural and urban people's lives is created by the poverty which makes them continue to suffer. Furthermore, there are factors such as class favoritism, political

inequity, caste and social prejudice, unfair education system, health-care and welfare services, shrewd entrepreneurs, etc, which also account for the sufferings of the subaltern class.

It is poverty in Laxamangarh, Gaya there is an exodus of jobless youths towards big cities and the protagonist Balram Halwai and his brother are no exception: So the rest of the village waited in a big group outside the shop. When the buses came, they got on—packing the inside, hanging from the railings, climbing onto the roofs—and went to Gaya; there they went to the station and rushed into the train—packing the inside, hanging from the railings, climbing onto the roofs—and went to Delhi, Calcutta and Dhanbad to find work. A month before the rain, the men came back from Dhanbad and Delhi and Culcutta, leaner, darker, angrier, but with money in their pockets. The women were waiting for them. They hid behind the door, and as soon as the men walked in, they pounced, like wild cats on a slab of flesh. (Adiga 2018: 21-22)

Besides, it is the aforementioned poverty that makes Balram leave school and work as a washer in a tea stall, desperate to undertake any kind of menial job. In this poverty-stricken society, young children are given no formal names, it is simply “Munna: It just means boy” (Adiga 2018: 10). Neither Balram’s mother nor his father are concerned about his name, because his “mother is very ill...she lies in bed and spews blood. She’s got no time to name [and father] is a rickshaw puller... he’s got no time to name me” (Adiga 2018: 10). It is the schoolteacher who names him Balram and marks his age in the school ledger. Balram’s

father experiences much hardship at work, which he describes:

A rich man's body is like a premium cotton pillow, white and soft and blank. Ours are different. My father's spine was a knotted rope, the kind that women use in village to pull water from wells; the clavicle curved around his neck in high relief, like a dog's collar; cuts and nicks and scars, like little whip marks in his flesh, ran down his chest and waist, reaching down below his hipbones into his buttocks. The story of a poor man's life is written on his body, in a sharp pen." (Adiga 2018: 22)

Zamindari practice is another powerful source that accounts for exploitation and subjugation of the subaltern class. Buffalo, Stork, Wild Boar and Raven are four landlords who got their names from "the peculiarities of appetite that had been detected" in them (Adiga 2018: 20). Among those, the Buffalo was the greediest because he had "eaten up the rickshaws and the roads. So if you ran a rickshaw, or used the road, you had to pay him his feed - one-third of whatever you earned, no less" (Adiga 2018: 21). The second greediest is Stork, who owned the river that flowed outside the village, as he took "a cut of every catch of fish caught by every fisherman in the river, and a toll from every boatman who crossed the river" (Adiga 2018: 20-21) to reach Laxamangarh. The third is Wild Boar, who possessed all the good agricultural land around Laxamangarh. Those, who wanted to work on those lands, "had to bow down to his feet, and touch the dust under his slippers, and agree to swallow his day wages" (Adiga 2018: 21). The final landlord is the Raven, who had the worst land as it was a dry, rocky hillside around

the fort. He reportedly “took a cut from the goatherds who went up there to graze with their flocks. If they did not have their money, he liked to dip his beak into their backsides” (Adiga 2018: 21). Because of their exploitation, the four of them were called “Animals [who] lived in high-walled mansion, their own wells and ponds, and didn’t need to come out into the village except to feed” (Adiga 2018: 21). Since the emergence of Naxals’ movement, they had sent their children to Dhanbad or Delhi. Due to Reena- Balram’s cousin’s lavish marriage, they had to get a big loan from Stork, who subsequently demanded that all members of the family had to work for him. Henceforth, Balram was pulled out of school and started working at a tea shop, where he got “better education” than “at any school” (Adiga 2018: 33) of life. However, his rebellious spirit still voiced: “I was destined not to stay a slave” (Adiga 2018: 35).

3. The nature of the subaltern class in Adiga’s Indian society

It is in this part that the nature of the subaltern class, its identity, the causes of its emergence its persecution, its voiceless and its backlash in Adiga’s Indian society are hope to be unraveled.

From Adiga’s perspective, the Indian society is bounded by the darkness of social taboos, rigid caste distinction, superstitions, caste and culture conflict. Human beings in this culture are recognized by their caste, as Stork’s old driver asks Balram: “What caste are you?” (Adiga 2018: 47). This is a similar question that is asked by Stork: “Halwai.... What caste is that, top or bottom?” (Adiga 2018: 53). Due to the fact that the landlord does not like Muslims, Ram Persad, the servant of Stork,

has to disguise his identity as a Hindu to get a job to support his starving family. In addition to this, religion is the reason as to why Ashok and Pinky's marriage is unaccepted, and also accounts for their subsequent broken relationship. It can be observed that the socio-cultural slavery has a serious influence on Indian people, as Adiga portrays:

The greatest thing to come out of this country in ten thousand years of its history is the Rooster Coop. (Adiga 2018: 147)

A handful of men in this country have trained the remaining 99.9 per cent— as strong, as talented, as intelligent in every way—to exist in perpetual servitude; a servitude so strong that you can put the key of his emancipation in a man's hands and he will throw it back at you with a curse. (Adiga 2018: 149)

The Rooster Coop works because the “Indian family” is trapped and firmly tied to it (Adiga 2018: 149). Only an individual who dares to put their family in the situation of hunted, beaten, and burned alive by the masters etc., can come out of the Coop . However, they would not be a normal human being, but a “White Tiger.”

Moreover, the superstitions still shoulder the subaltern class a burden, as “marriage” brings “more rain in the village” (Adiga 2018: 163), “any diseases, of body or mind, get cured when you penetrate a virgin” (Adiga 2018: 165), “his buffalo died at once” because he “stopped believing in God etc” (Adiga 2018: 159). Their society becomes even worse with the practice of dowry demonstrated by the marriage of Reena and another is Kishan's. It seems to Balram that: “It was one of the *good* marriages. We had the boy, and we screwed the girl's family hard. I remember exactly

what we got in dowry...five thousand rupees in cash, all crisp new unsoiled notes fresh from the bank, plus a Hero bicycle, plus a thick gold necklace for Kishan” (Adiga 2018: 42).

Furthermore, the fate of the subaltern class becomes even darker under the corrupt educational system in Indian society. In Balram’s hometown, the schoolteacher is called, “big Paan—and spit man” (Adiga 2018: 25). He goes to sleep by noon, and drinks toddy in the school. Instead of the supply of free food being given to the students, it goes to the teacher who gives a legitimate excuse for it: “he hadn’t been paid his salary in six months” (Adiga 2018: 28). The students cannot get their uniform offered to them by the government, because “a week later they turned up for sale in the neighboring village” (Adiga 2018: 28). It is quite correct that Adiga remarks the whole educational system is governed by a “crowd of thugs and idiots” (Adiga 2018: 30), which he refers to as a “Jungle” (Adiga 2018: 30).

Another factor contributing to the miseries of the subaltern class is the poor health services and non-implementation of government policies. As Balram assures:

...there is no hospital in Laxamangarh, although there are three different foundation stones for a hospital, laid by three different politicians before three different elections. (Adiga 2018: 39)

His father thus died because of lacking hospital and medical facilities. The novelist takes advantage of their bad medical services to criticize the government in order to depict the sufferings of the subaltern class in that current society. It becomes more ridiculous when the Great Socialist

inaugurates Lohia Universal Free Hospital in view of election result. There is no doctor in the hospital, therefore Balram states:

Cat has tasted blood. A couple of Muslim men had spread a newspaper on the ground and were sitting on it. One of them had an open wound on his leg. He invited us to sit with him and his friend. Kishan and I lowered father onto the newspaper sheets. We waited there ...the Muslim men kept adding newspapers to the ground, and the line of diseased eyes, raw wounds, and delirious mouths kept growing. (Adiga 2018: 39-40)

The readers may wonder what the doctors are doing there if they do not stay in the hospitals. It is because they “can keep the rest of [their] government salary and go work in some private hospital for the rest of the week. Forget the village. Because according to this ledger [they]’ve *been* there. [They]’ve *treated* my wounded leg. [They]’ve *healed* that girl’s jaundice” (Adiga 2018: 41). It shows the audience an immoral image of the Indian medical doctors at that time. It is bitterly resented by the subaltern class, who have to survive under such a government.

The White Tiger aims to unravel that the subaltern class comprises of laborers from variety sectors of beggars, cooperatives, chauffeurs, hungers, personal helpers, prostitutes, unshelter residents who are under the control of the corrupt police, legal and administrative structure and an unfriendly master-servant relationship. This situation perpetually remains in big cities such as Delhi, Bangalore in India. It is even more clearly described in the journey from Laxamangarh and up to Bangalore of Balram. It can be interpreted that the subaltern class’ socio-psychological

condition cannot be changed. Although these cities can offer a variety of job opportunities, it is all covered by the ruling/elite class' social behavior and psyche. This aforementioned class can choose to be a landlord or politician, a police official or a bureaucrat, the upper caste people or the industrialist. By contrast, the subaltern class is trapped and controlled in "Rooster Coop," struggling hard to get out of it. Balram is described as a stereotype of the subaltern class, with all of their anger, frustration, protest and revenge to achieve success in his life. With Ashok's murder, Balram is supposed to reflect on the reaction of deep-rooted frustration of the subaltern class, enjoying the favoritism of the highest class and the contrasting subaltern one. Much more than that, the consequences of cellphone usage, regular routine, pollution, impact of city culture and other additional factors also create new frontiers of Darkness in India.

On the one hand, India is pictured with much advanced and modern of science and technology as an emerging entrepreneurial power in the world, on the other hand the lives of the subaltern class in Delhi are described as follows:

They have come from the Darkness too—you can tell by their bodies, filthy faces, by the animal-like way they live under the huge bridges and overpasses, making fires and washing and taking lice out of their hair while the cars roar past them. These homeless people...never wait for a red light. (Adiga 2018: 99)

These poor bastards had come from the Darkness to Delhi to find some light—but they were still in the darkness. (Adiga 2018:16)

To live under some concrete bridge, begging for their food and without hope for the future. That's not much better than being dead.

(Adiga 2018:270)

Automobile and taxi drivers constitute a large portion of the subaltern class inhabiting the cities. Balram can be seen as a typical character of this class, bearing miseries in life, humiliation, struggle, dream and involvement in criminal as well as illegal activities. Balram, who works as a driver, is hired by a village landlord named Stork to work for his son Ashok, daughter-in-law Pinky and their two Pomeranian dogs. It occurs to Balram the feeling that he must have his own identity from his first capture of Delhi from the far view behind the Wheel of a Honda City. He is attracted by the glamour of the city with luxury shopping centers, the 36,000,004 gods, busy and noisy streets. Therefore, he is in between of the choices of being a good servant as he used to or being identity recognised in the new era. He has to create a new moral code for himself in the heart of a new India. Working as a chauffeur also means that he has to simultaneously do the job of a servant, undertaking chores such as washing utensils, taking care of dogs, doing all housework, and so forth. Besides, he is recalled of selling drugs and prostitutes as well as reading *Murder Weekly* with full enthusiasm because “a billion servants are secretly fantasizing about strangling their bosses” (Adiga 2018: 104). The worst aspects of a driver job is further illustrated:

You have hours to yourself while waiting for your employer. You can spend this time chit-chatting and scratching your groin. You can read murder and rape magazines. You can develop the chauffeur's habit—it's a kind of yoga, really—of putting a finger in your nose and letting your mind go blank for hours (they should call it 'bored driver's

asana). You can sneak a bottle of Indian liquor into the car—boredom makes drunks of so many honest drivers. (Adiga 2018: 126)

It can be inferred that only by murdering their masters, drivers and servants can be liberated from their servant position or caste. This is why Balram has never felt guilty for Ashok's murder. He wants to try the feeling of freedom: "just for a day, just for an hour, just for a *minute*, what it means not to be a servant" (Adiga 2018: 276). He "had [his] ambition to do something moving out of the darkness and acquire not only a social status but an identity" (Subham 2020: 3).

Prostitution is another darkness area of India of Light. Women, including foreign female students, are forced into this type of career to earn their living in the big cities. In Dhanbad, Delhi and Bangalore, there are red light districts where one can negotiate a price with these prostitutes. Their price rates are dependent on "high class or low class? Virgin or non-virgin?" (Adiga 2018: 193). In Delhi, most of the rich people prefer those "golden-haired women" (Adiga 2018: 197). Forgery is also involved in this business; suppliers offer female prostitutes whose hair died in golden to get the highest price. Nepali girls, Ukrainian students and poor laborers from the village working in the cities allow their women to work in prostitution, too.

Corrupted police and legal and administrative structure mark are another force which constitute the Darkness of Balram's society. They prefer to protect the rich from the legal proceedings in order to gain a super-profit. Therefore, the hit and run case which was legally caused by Pinky is shifted to Balram:

The jails of Delhi are full of drivers who are there behind the bars because they are taking the blame for their good, solid middle-class masters. We have left the villages, but the masters still own us, body, soul, and arse.” (Adiga 2018: 145)

The subaltern class fail to gain fairness and justice, due to the fact that the judges ignore the real situation of the case as they “are in the racket too. They take their bribe; they ignore the discrepancies in the case. And life goes on” (Adiga 2018: 145). The close relationship between criminals, police and mass communication is also exposed. Balram Halwai, who disguised himself as Ashok Sharma to become a Bangalore-based successful entrepreneur, is very proud that he is “one of those who cannot be caught in India” (Adiga 2018: 275). Entrepreneurial success and modern city culture have a deep-rooted impact on their life. A man who is innocent and rustic becomes a new man with selfish, opportunist and criminalistic tendencies, which has the worst effect on humanity. Balram’s long-travelled journey depicts this loss: “All these changes happened in me because they happened first in Mr. Ashok. He returned from America an innocent man, but life in Delhi corrupted him—and once the master of the Honda City becomes corrupted, how can the driver stay innocent?” (Adiga 2018: 167). Pollution, mechanical routine of life, family and society structure changing, terrorism, the existing of the subaltern class etc. serve as evidence to verify the Darkness of the current society.

4. Conclusion

On the whole, Adiga has vividly depicted the different images of India, with the preominant two being India of Light and India of Dark. Its main theme portrays the contrast between India's rise as a modern global economy, and its working or subaltern class who live in crushing poverty or the poorest of the poor. His focus, however, is providing the latter with a literary voice. Adiga shares his thoughts on the nature of progress with Hirsh Sawhney "technology is one aspect of progress; it is not progress in itself. Progress is holistic - its water and cell phones." Donahue also confesses that this novel is one of the most powerful books she has read in decades, with "No hyperbole...an amazing and angry novel about injustice and power" (Mona 2021).

Thomas has remarked that "Adiga's first novel, *The White Tiger*, delivers an indomitable central character and an India bristling with economic possibility, competing loyalties and class struggle" (2008). Sudheer Apte considers the most interesting part of the novel, "is richly observed world of have-nots in India...with his keen observation and sharp writing Adiga takes us into Balram Halwai's mind, whether we want or not". He thus interviews Adiga asking him how he got the inspiration for Balram Halwai and how he captured his voice. The novelist states that:

Balram Halwai is a composite of various men I've met when traveling through India. I spend a lot of my time loitering about train stations, or bus stands, or servants' quarters and slums, and I listen and talk to the people around me. There is a kind of continuous murmur or growl

beneath middle class life in India, and this noise never gets corded, Balram is what you'd hear if one day the drain and faucets in your house started talking.

(Interview with Aravind Adiga, author of *The White Tiger*. 2008).

Adiga has successfully highlighted the subordinate or subaltern issue in *The White Tiger*. His novel has really emphasized the important role of the subaltern class in the Indian social-economic development. It can be inferred that the author applies his communism-based perspective to expose and unravel the nature of the subaltern class, its identity, causes of its emergence, its persecution, its voiceless and its backlash. In other words, Adiga, who is considered as a communistic manifesto, is to strongly plead for this subaltern class in his fatherland's society.

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