

# Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* : The Voice of Underclass —A Postcolonial Dialectics

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In the post colonial dialectics 'subaltern' or 'underclass' occupies prominent place which incorporates the entire people that is subordinate in terms of class, caste, age, gender, and office, or in any other way. It is the subject position that defines subalternity. Even when it operates in terms of class, age and gender, it is more psychological than physical. The lack and deprivation, loneliness and alienation, subjugation and subordination, the resignation and silence, the resilience and neglect mark the lives of subaltern, even when they resist and rise up, they feel bounded and defeated by their subject positions. They have no representatives or spokesperson in the society they live in and so helplessly suffer and get marginal place or no place at all in the history and culture of which they are the essential part as human beings.

Adiga in his debut novel *The White Tiger*, which begged him Man Booker Prize 2008, created two different Indias in one: "an India of Light and an India of Darkness". (14) It is the India of Darkness which is focused by the novelist articulating the voice of silent majority, trying to dismantle the discrimination between the "Big Bellies and the Small Bellies" (64) and create a society based on the principles of equality and justice. Balram Halwai, the protagonist is a typical voice of underclass metaphorically described as "Rooster coop" (173) and struggling to set free from age-old slavery and exploitation. His anger, protest, indulgence in criminal acts, prostitution, drinking, chasing, grabbing all the opportunities, means fair or foul endorse deep-rooted frustration and its reaction against the "haves". Bloody acts, opportunism, entrepreneurial success of Balram, emergence of Socialists in India alarm that the voice of the underclass can not be ignored for long. The paper endeavours to analyse the nature of underclass, its identity, causes of its emergence,

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ways of its subjection and articulation and reaction against it. The novel is centred on Balram Halwai, a son of a rickshaw puller, destined to make sweets becomes Ashok Sharma. His transformation from Munna—Balram Halwai—White Tiger—Ashok Sharma is the blue print for the rise of underclass. Balram is the strong voice of underclass in which marginal farmers, landless labourers, jobless youths, poor, auto and taxi drivers, servants, prostitutes, beggars and unprivileged figure. The underclass is the result of our 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, police and judicial working. These forces collectively operate to perpetuate the underclass. This underclass constitutes Dark India.

The novel is structured as a series of letters written to the Chinese Premier by a former car driver from Laxamangarh, Bihar. Why the Chinese Premier? "Because" the narrator Balram Halwai, based in the city of Bangalore acknowledges, "the future of the world lies with the yellow man and the brown man now that our erstwhile master, the White skinned man has wasted himself through buggery, mobile phone usage and drug abuse" (5-6). India of Light with access to education, health care, transportation facilities, electricity, running water, hope, justice, emerging entrepreneurial power in the world surpassing China; India's rapid advancement in the field of science and technology, space, real estate, yoga and meditation, hotel and tourism industry, expansion of cities and mall culture, Delhi is adulated as Young America in India; the voice of the underclass is strongly articulated and attempts to give them proper recognition in the society. Entrepreneurial success is the hallmark of India: "You Chinese are far ahead of us in every respect, except that you don't have entrepreneurs....Thousands and thousands of them. Especially in the field of technology. And these entrepreneurs—we entrepreneurs have set up all these outsourcing companies that virtually run America now". (4) The visit of the Chinese Premier to Bangalore verifies China's interest in India's advancement in this area. The narrator explains the reasons for entrepreneurial success: "My country is the kind where it pays to play it both ways: the Indian entrepreneur has to be strait and crooked, mocking and believing, sly and sincere, at the same time" (8-9). The secrets of success in a modern globalized world has summed up in the last section of the novel. Murder, manipulation, malpractices, opportunism, bribery, absconding police

and judicial proceedings all are justified for success and teaching based on the facts of life: "A school where you won't be allowed to corrupt anyone's head with prayers and stories about God and Gandhi—nothing but the facts of life for these kids. A school full of White Tigers" (319). Adiga makes humble prediction: "In twenty years' time, it will be just us yellow man and brown man at the top of the pyramid, and we'll rule the whole world" (305). Ashok, the employer of Balram also observes shining India: "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". (89) The voice of Dark India—the under class that is, comments Uma Mahadevan-Dasgupta, "intelligent, savagely funny and quite unforgettable—it is also a voice of anger and protest, and it is almost completely un sentimental. It is a voice that seeks out and understands the power of beauty" (2008 : 128). The novel can also be assessed as a socialist manifesto trying to dismantle the discrimination between the "Big Bellies and the Small Bellies" (64) and evolve an egalitarian society.

The larger canvas of the novel discusses the Dark pictures of India. Some critics have raised suspicion over his undue emphasis to this dismal portrayal. Adiga refuted that the novel was an attack on the growth story of India:

At a time when India is going through great changes and, with China, is likely to inherit the world from the West, it is important that writers like me try to highlight the brutal injustices of society...criticism by writers like Flaubert, Balzac and Dickens in the 19<sup>th</sup> century helped England and France to become better societies. That's why I am trying to do—it's not an attack on the country, it's about the greater process of self-examination ( rediff.com).

Just when we thought that the world has raving about the economic miracle of India, a brutal confession by *The White Tiger* protagonist exposes the rot in the three pillars of modern India—democracy, enterprize and justice—reducing them to the tired clichés of a faltering nation. And the author of this tragic tale grabs the prestigious Booker, with the head of the jury, Michel Portillio, calling it a work that shows the "dark side of India—a new territory" (*Sunday Times of India*, Oct 19, 2008). For Indians there is nothing new about this territory. West is holding up *The White Tiger* as a

mirror to us. It is telling us that India is not shining and despite its claims of a booming economy, it is still “near-heart of darkness”, which it has been since time immemorial. Shobhan Saxena smells conspiracy behind this prize:

The west is once again using our poverty to humiliate us. Seeing the award as a stamp of disapproval on India's poor social indicators, a recently published Indian author calls *The White Tiger* “a tourist's account of India”. He raises questions about the intentions of Adiga who grew up in Australia and went to elite universities in England and the U.S....Adiga's story may remain the view of a professional observer, who failed to see anything good about the country he traveled through as a journalist, always recording and never experiencing anything real. It could be mere suspicion, but it takes care of our guilt. (*SundayTimes of India*, Oct 19, 2008).

Sir Simon Jenkins, former chairman of the Booker prize jury commented: “Indian writers in English face a peculiar problem—they write about India but their readership is mostly in other countries. Because of this paradox they create an image of India that is exotic and doesn't show the real India. I worry about this” (*SundayTimes of India*, Oct 19, 2008). Kevin Rushby extends the similar view: “My hunch is this is fundamentally an outsider's view and a superficial one. There are so many alternative Indias, unconnected and unheard. Adiga is an interesting talent. I hope he will immerse himself deeper in that country, then go on to greater things” (*Guardian*, Oct. 15, 2008). But Gurucharan Das, author and commentator makes a very pertinent and balanced remark: “A book should not be judged on the basis of whether it creates a negative or positive picture of a country. It should be seen as a work of art and judged on its literary merits. If it is a good book, it's a good book and it deserves an award” (*Sunday Times of India*, Oct. 19, 2008). Ever widening gap between the rich and poor, rural and urban, and the brutal reality of an economic system that allows a small minority to prosper at the expense of the silent majority; political culture of India, voting behaviour, social milieu, caste and culture conflict, superstition, social taboos, exploitation of underclass, Zamindari practice, emergence of Naxalism, unemployment especially in rural India, prostitution, master-servant relationship, nexus between the politicians, criminals and the police, mockery of education system, hollowness of Government's welfare

schemes, poor medical services, harmful impact of scientific, technological and industrial development etc mark off the novel. The final impression of the novel is that it justifies every kind of trick to succeed in life. Balam Halwai, the protagonist and his rise from Munna to Ashok Sharma verifies this proposition. Adiga's exposure of the dark areas of India can be taken positively to cure the sick image of it—if we focus on those areas and work sincerely, undoubtedly a new India will emerge.

Political system and bureaucratic set up, according to the novel refer to the darkest areas of our country which breed, “rotteness and corruption” (50) in our society and hamper all developmental and welfare schemes. It restricts half of this country from achieving its potential. Most of the politicians are “half-baked. That's the whole tragedy of this country”. (10) The story of Balam's emergence is the story of how a half-baked fellow is produced. Politics is the last refuge for scoundrels. Government doctors, entrepreneurs, tax payers, industrialists all have to befriend a minister and his sidekick to fulfill their vested interests. Mukesh and Ashok also bribe the minister to settle income tax accounts. Election, though we feel proud of glorious democracy of ours, are manipulated; power transfers from one hand to another but the common man's fate remains unchanged. Adiga considers, “Typhoid, Cholera and election fever the three main diseases of this country and the last one the worst”. (98) Voters discuss about the election helplessly as “eunuchs discussing the *Kama Sutra* ”. (98) Money-bags, muscle power, police, strategic alignment of various factions and power to woo the underclass assure the victory in the political game. Balam reports: “I am India's most faithful voter, and I still have not seen the inside of a voting booth”. (102) Adiga observes that we are lagging behind China because of “this fucked up system called parliamentary democracy. Otherwise, we'd be just like China”. (156) This rotten system has created new distinctions and classes. In the old days there were one thousand castes and destinies in India now just two castes: “Men with Big Bellies, and Men with Small Bellies. And only two destinies: eat—or get eaten up”. (64) After independence the British left—the cages had been let open; and the “animals” (metaphorically for politicians) had attacked and ripped each other. 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 didn't “matter whether you were a woman, or a Muslim, or an

untouchable—anyone with a belly could rise up”. (64) Kiran Desai also makes hard-hitting attack on the corrupt political system in India: “ 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” (*Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*, 20). In *The Inheritance of Loss*, out of fifty- three chapters, more than eighteen chapters are exclusively devoted to describe insurgency rampant in the whole country for separate states. Desai curtly blames the policy makers for this: “ 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”. (128) “The partition of India”, according to Desai, is the result of wrong policies of our Government, which she calls the “first heart-attack to our country...that has never been healed”. (*The Inheritance of Loss*, 129)

The novel gives the detailed accounts of the Indian society—rural as well as urban and its various facets. Laxamangarh, Gaya, Dhanbad, Delhi and Bangalore are generic, represent the portrait of India. Poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, caste and culture conflict, superstition, dowry practice, economic disparity, Zamindari system, and exploitation of marginal farmers and landless labourers, rise of Naxalism, corrupt education system, poor health services, tax evading racket, embittered master-servant relationship, prostitution, weakening family structure, entrepreneurial success and its fallout etc. constitute the basic structure of Indian society which largely forms the Dark image of India. Adiga who left Mangalore in 1991 when his father moved to Australia. After 15 years, returning to the city as a journalist with *Time*, he found it has changed vastly. The population of the city doubled, shopping malls and high-rise apartment buildings has reshaped the skyline. There were new five medical colleges, four dental colleges, fourteen physiotherapy colleges and three hundred fifty schools, colleges and polytechnics. The new affluence seemed to have come at a price. Looking around the transformed city, he also noticed a group of drifters and homeless men—the part of underclass who seemed to have been left out of the story of India's growth. Adiga was curious and troubled by the sight, and during his travels in India as a journalist, he wanted to explore more. *The White Tiger* is a tale of this underclass and its life-begging for food, sleeping under concrete flyovers, defecating on the roadside, shivering in the cold, struggling in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, for its freedom. V.S.Naipaul has also

highlighted the Darkness of India in his *Area of Darkness*(1964): “rigid caste distinction” (53), “English mimicry” (55), “Indian lavatory and kitchens—the visitors’ nightmare” (58), “clubs of Bombay and Delhi...poverty” (62-66), “misfortunes of refugee family” (68), underclass denied of opportunities; lack of hygiene and sense of sanitation: “Indians defecate everywhere” (70), “labour is a degradation” (73), businessman: “all his duty is, by whatever means, to make money” (77); “symbolic actions” (80); irrational “reservation policy [which] places responsibility in the hands of the unqualified”(82).

It is extreme poverty which creates Darkness in the life of the rural as well as urban people and it perpetuates the sufferings of the underclass. Illiteracy, unemployment, Zamindari practice, social taboos, rigid caste discrimination, caste and culture conflict, corrupt politicians and bureaucrats, economic disparity , superstitions, corrupt education system and health services, shrewd entrepreneurs, flood, mall culture etc contribute to the sufferings of underclass. 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 Calcutta, 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. (26)

It is poverty which compels Balram—The White Tiger to leave the school and work in a tea stall washing utensils and doing every kind of menial jobs. In the poverty-stricken society young kids are given no formal names –simply “Munna: It just means boy” (15); neither the mother nor the father is concerned about the name, Balram reports: “mother’s 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” (15). It was the school teacher who named him Balram and marked his age in the school ledger. Vikram Halwai, Balram's father is hit by poverty and tough manual work. His body tells the history of his life and sufferings. Balram reports:

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”. (26-27)

Kiran Desai also makes similar description of Cook and his poverty writ large on his body in *The Inheritance of Loss*.

Zamindari practice is also a powerful source of exploitation and subjugation of underclass. Buffalo, Stork, Wild Boar and Raven are four landlords who got their names from the peculiarities of appetite that had been detected in them. Stork owned the river that flowed outside the village, and 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” (24) to reach Laxamangarh. Wild Boar, his brother owned all the good agricultural land around Laxamangarh. Men 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”. (25) The Raven owned the worst land, which was dry, rocky hillside around the fort, and “took a cut from the goatherds who went up there to graze with their flocks. If they didn't have their money, he liked to dip his beak into their backsides”. (25) The Buffalo was the greediest of all. 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”. (25) Due to their exploitative tendencies, Adiga calls them “Animals” (25) who lived in high-walled mansion, their own wells and ponds, and didn't need to come out into the village except to feed. These landlords also align with regional political parties for their selfish motives. With the emergence of Naxalism these landlords had sent their sons and daughters to Dhanbad or Delhi. Balram's cousin-sister Reena's lavish marriage and lavish dowry compelled them to borrow

big loan from Stork who in lieu of that demanded all members of the family to work for him and Balram was pulled out of the school and started working at tea shop where he got, “better education” than “at any school” (38) of life and its grim realities. But his rebellious spirit echoes the voice: “I was destined not to stay a slave”. (41) The bloody fighting between the Naxal outfits and the landlords, having their own private armies, hits the common man the most. They go around to shoot and torture people suspected of sympathizing with the other.

The world of Darkness abounds with social taboos, rigid caste distinction, superstitions, caste and culture conflict. Man is known and recognized by his caste. The old driver of Stork asked Bakram: “What caste are you?”. (56) Similar question is asked by Stork: “Halwai....What caste is that, top or bottom?” (62) Ram Persad, the servant of Stork disguised his identity because the prejudiced landlord didn't like Muslim—he claimed to be a Hindu just to get a job and feed his starving family. On disclosure he was sacked from the job. While playing cricket, Roshan, the grandson of Stork calls himself Azaruddin, the Captain of India. Stork reacts quickly, “call yourself Gavasker. Azaruddin is a Muslim”. (70) The marriage of Ashok and Pinky is not appreciated by the society because Pinky is not a Hindu. Later, due to caste and cultural differences their relationship is snapped. Socio-cultural slavery is perpetuated in our society by elite through the process of socialization. Sarcastically, the novelist comments:

The greatest thing to come out of this country in ten thousand years of its history is the Rooster Coop. (173)

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. (176)

The Rooster Coop works because of the “Indian family” (176) and poor are trapped and tied to the Coop. Only a man who dares to see his family—hunted, beaten, and burned alive by the masters, can come out of the Coop that would not be a normal human being but a White Tiger. “Marriage” brings “more rain in the village” (190),

“any diseases, of body or mind, get cured when you penetrate a virgin” (193), “His buffalo died at once” because he “stopped believing in God” (186) etc. are the superstitions common in the society.

The practice of dowry is another social stigma in Laxamangarh. The marriage of Balram's cousin-sister Reena pushed the whole family into world of misery and Balram is dropped from the school. Kishan's marriage also brings huge dowry, Balram reports: “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”. (51)

The life of underclass darkens when corrupt and defunct education system operates in the society. In Laxamangarh, there is a typical school teacher called, “big *Paan*—and spit Man” (29), goes to sleep by noon, and drinks toddy in the school. Supply of free food to the school goes to the teacher who gives legitimate excuse for it –“he hadn't been paid his salary in six months”. (33) Truck full of uniform that government had sent to school is not issued to the children, “but a week later they turned up for sale in the neighboring village”. (33) The whole education system is governed by the “crowd of thugs and idiots” (35), which Adiga calls “Jungle”. (35)

Poor health services and non-implementation of government policies expose the rampant malpractices which collectively enhance the miseries of the poor. In Laxamangarh, there were three different foundation stones for a hospital, laid by three different politicians before three different elections. Balram's father died due to the lack of hospital and medical facilities. Medical services are shown as an object of political mockery and social stigma. The Great Socialist inaugurated Lohia Universal Free Hospital in view of election result. There is no doctor in the hospital, doctor seldom visits the hospital; even the rooms are not safe, Balram reports:

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 (48-49).

The post of doctor is auctioned because there is good money in public service and doctor gets the job offering bribe and touching the feet of the great Socialist—the employer. Subsequently, “you can keep the rest of your government salary and go work in some private hospital for the rest of the week. Forget the village. Because according to this ledger you've *been* there. You've *treated* my wounded leg. You've *healed* that girl's jaundice” (50).

While the novel moves from country to city, the whole world of underclass also migrates—their exploitation and sufferings. With the labourers working in the industrial set-up, taxi and auto drivers, servants, prostitutes, beggars, poor and shivering lots hiding under flyovers, slum-dwellers, corrupt police, legal and administrative structure, unfriendly master-servant relationship underclass emerges. Big cities like Delhi and Bangalore witness both kinds of India. Balram's journey from Laxamangarh to Dhanbad then Delhi and finally to Bangalore endorses that the socio-psychological condition of the underclass remains unchanged. Though the cities provide ample opportunities of job, social behaviour and psyche of the upper class is identical everywhere—whether it is a landlord or politician, police official, bureaucrat, upper caste people, richman, industrialist or entrepreneur. Everywhere underclass is trapped in Rooster Coop, struggling to come out of the cage. Balram is the conscience of underclass—their anger, frustration, protest and revenge, ready to adopt a new moral code of conduct to succeed in life. Murder of Ashok by Balram is the reaction of deep-rooted frustration of underclass experiencing the polarities between the upper class and lower class. Apart from these, pollution, hectic routine of life, harmful effects of mobile, impact of city culture etc. create new territories of Darkness in India.

India is shown as an emerging entrepreneurial power in the world. Advancement in the field of science and technology, space, transportation, hotel industry, tourism, real estate, expansion of cities, mall culture, industries and outsourcing etc. characterize the image of India. But all these developmental activities depend on underclass with distinct identity:

Thousands of people live on the sides of the road in Delhi. 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. (119-120)

These poor bastards had come from the Darkness to Delhi to find some light—but they were still in the darkness. (138)

To live under some concrete bridge, begging for their food, and without hope for the future. That's not much better than being dead. (314-315)

Auto and taxi drivers constitute a big fragment of underclass inhabiting in the cities. Balram is a true prototype of this class manifesting miseries of their life, humiliation, struggle, dreams and involvement in criminal and illegal activities. Balram as a chauffeur was hired by Stork, a village landlord for his son Ashok, daughter-in-law Pinky and their two Pomeranian dogs. From behind the Wheel of a Honda City, Balram first sees Delhi. The city is a revelation. Amid the cockroaches and call-centres, the 36,000,004 gods, the slums, the shopping malls and the crippling traffic jams, Balram's re-education begins. Under the conflict between two opposite thoughts to be a loyal son and servant or fulfill his desire to better himself, he devises a new morality at the heart of a new India. Drivers also carry out the work of a servant washing utensils, brooming the floors, cooking, massaging, scrubbing, lathering and drying the skin of dogs; they sell drugs, prostitutes and read with full enthusiasm *Murder Weekly* because, "a billion servants are secretly fantasizing about strangling their bosses" (125). There is no space for the poor in the malls of New India. The worst part of being a driver is, Balram narrates:

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. (149)

Drivers and servants are also forced to confess the crime their

masters have committed. Though they earn some extra income but they remain servant. Balram is so much disgusted of the life of a slave that he never feels guilty of Ashok's murder. He wants to experience "just for a day, just for an hour, just for a *minute*, what it means not to be a servant". (321)

Prostitution is another dark area of India of Light. In the big cities, due to poverty most of the women are forced to adopt this profession. In Dhanbad, Delhi and Bangalore, there are red light areas one can negotiate a price with these women. And the price depends on, "High class or low class? Virgin or non-virgin?" (227). In Delhi, especially rich people prefer "golden-haired women" (232). Forgery also involves in this racket; suppliers present a woman dyed in golden hair to snatch the maximum price. Nepali girls, Ukrainian students and poor labourers from the village working in construction of mall allow their women for prostitution.

Corrupt police, legal and administrative structure mark off another dark spot of shining India. Police masterminds the forced out confession to protect the rich men from the legal proceedings and get huge money in lieu of that. The hit and run case which legally belongs to 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" (170). Even judges ignore to see forced confession, because they "are in the racket too. They take their bribe, they ignore the discrepancies in the case. And life goes on" (170). The close nexus between criminals, police and media persons is also exposed. Balram Halwai transformed into Ashok Sharma—a Bangalore based successful entrepreneur is confident that he is "one of those who cannot be caught in India" (320).

Entrepreneurial success and modern city culture has deep-rooted impact on our life. A man –innocent and rustic becomes a new man—selfish, opportunist and criminal which is the greatest harm to humanity. Balram's journey from Laxamangarh to Dhanbad then to Delhi and finally to Bangalore proves 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?" (197). Pollution,

mechanical routine of life, changed structure of family and society, terrorism, emergence of underclass etc. are ample evidences to verify the Dark image of India.

Adiga has graphically portrayed the different images of India—India of Light and India of Dark. But his focus is on the latter and he tries to give it a literary voice. Adiga in conversation with Hirsh Sawhney explained the nature of progress: “technology is one aspect of progress; it is not progress in itself. Progress is holistic—its water and cell phones” (brooklynsail.org). Deirdre Donahue considers the novel one of the most powerful books she has read in decades with, “No hyperbole...an amazing and angry novel about injustice and power” (complete-review.com). Lee Thomas has reviewed the novel in *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 27, 2008): “Adiga’s first novel *The White Tiger*, delivers an indomitable central character and an India bristling with economic possibility, competing loyalties and class struggle” (sfgate.com). Sudheer Apte finds the most enjoyable 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” (mostlyfiction.com). In an interview he was asked how he got the inspiration for Balram Halwai and how he captured his voice? He replied:

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 recorded, Balram is what you’d hear if one day the drain and faucets in your house started talking (Interview with the author.htm).

Adiga has successfully highlighted the subaltern issue in the novel and brought home the idea that in the story of India’s progress role of the underclass is important. He, as a communist manifesto, pleads strongly for the classless society

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