

**CLASS DISCRIMINATION UNDER THE IMPACT OF TRANSGRESSION IN
'THE WHITE TIGER' BY ARAVIND ADIGA**

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ABSTRACT: *This further study on Aravind Adiga's "The White Tiger" pivots round the class discrimination that hints the transgression of the protagonist, Balram Halwai, as well as his corrupted masters. It robustly delineates on the protagonist who was brought up in a remote village of Bihar that is often called as the 'Darkness' -a place without the light of educations and modern privileges. Balram narrates the 'ins and outs' of his adventurous life through a letter to a foreign luminary- Wen Jiabao, the Chinese Prime-Minister, on his stopover to Bangalore as an official task that upholds the facts of poverty, the evil of the feudal landlords and the miseries of the subaltern people of India. Adiga's approach to picture the 20th Century India, has successfully been put into practice by the paroxysms of social injuries in several corners.*

KEYWORDS: Poverty, Discrimination, Transgression, Cast, Entrepreneurship, Vicissitude

INTRODUCTION

'The White Tiger' is an outstanding creation of Man Booker Prize (2008) winning writer, Aravind Adiga. In this fictitious novel, Adiga has described the miserable life styles of modern India. The central character, Balram Halway, however, takes in the wrong path to be established in the society as a rich man and for this reason, he has been to kill his serving master-Mr. Ashok. Though he tries to be a successful entrepreneur, he committed so many crimes in the long run. Adiga has tried to picture those miserable things that happened all over the Indian society- the society between the poor and the rich people. On his way of describing all these things, the writer depicted the discriminations between the two classes. The poor man like Balram, tries to break the 'rooster coop'- the so-called social jail of the poor- and the rich to be richer by torturing and exploiting the lower class people. Thus, who are right or wrong in justice has become the studying point here, in the black color of class discrimination.

Class Discrimination

At the outset, class discrimination is found in consideration of the river Ganga. To the Hindu, The Ganga is a sacred river and it brings in both happiness and miseries in their lives because it gives them holiness in their minds as well as birth of foods and money. Besides, it has the dark sides because it has blown through most of the Dark areas where people suffer for the want of various fundamental human rights. Plus, the Indian government has a huge amount of budget for keeping this Ganga always clean and hygienic. But, the Big Guns of the society, launder money in a great extent. They become rich taking off the poor interests. Here, we get a big example of discrimination. While narrating all these things to the Chinese Prime ministers, Balram mentions,

“Why, I am talking of Mother Ganga, daughter of the Vedas, river of illumination, protector of us all, breaker of the chain of birth and rebirth. Everywhere this river flows, that area is the Darkness.” (p.15)

Please understand, Your Excellency, that India is two countries in one: an India of Light, and an India of Darkness. The ocean brings light to my country. Every place on the map of India near the ocean is well-off. But the river brings darkness to India – the black river. (p.14)

In the poor families, people live together with their well and woes, fight, quarrel, hate and so on but remain together because a poor can understand another poor man rather than a rich. This is the very common picture of the poor people. But, at the end of the day, these people are to suffer a huge by the rich. The rich use them in various toilsome works but pay back a little. Also, they are to face the untold sufferings created by the rich. Nevertheless, they try to be happy with what they have. End of the day, they try to have a sound sleep because they will have to face the extreme reality from the next day. This is their happiness-

“Every now and then they stop their work, because it is time to fight. This means throwing metal vessels at one another, or pulling each other’s hair, and then making up, by putting kisses on their palms and pressing them to the other’s cheeks. At night they sleep together, their legs falling one over the other, like one creature, a millipede.” (p.21)

Adiga has metaphorized the men living in poverty as “half baked men”, ‘Uncivilized Monkey’ and “human spider”. Half baked means not fully educated. These half baked people consist darkness in their hearts as they are to practice several superstitions and norms and customs in the classified society of India. The ruling people of the rich class takes the opportunities of their being half baked and use them according to their own wills. Such as, Pinky madam, the wife of Mr. Ashok, once, addressed Balram as ‘Uncivilized Monkey’ though she used Balram while leaving her husband in a night. Even after this, the poor workers think place their masters after the almighty Creator since, they are the providers of jobs and money as well. They stay together over and over again to be with their own tastes and temperaments. On the other hand, the rich enjoy their own malpractices. So, there remains a contradiction always in these two classes, that are often called as the bitter ironies.

"Go to a tea shop anywhere along the Ganga, sir, and look at the men working in that tea shop--men, I say, but better to call them human spiders that go crawling in between and under the tables with rags in their hands, crushed humans in crushed uniforms, sluggish, unshaven, in their thirties or forties but still 'boys.' But that is your fate if you do your job well--with honesty, dedication, and sincerity, the way Gandhi would have done it, no doubt." (p.51)

In a soliloquy, Balram says, he has done everything not going out of dishonesty and the initial experiences was received from the core point of poverty. Here comes the speeches of the protagonist that convey the acts of total dishonesty:

“I did my job with near total dishonesty, lack of dedication, and insincerity--and so the tea shop was a profoundly enriching experience." (p.43)”

Furthermore, Adiga endorsed on the clash of poor and rich from the very ancient time. According to Balram, in a narration to the premier, the cold war between the poor and rich has been started from the dawn of time. In this war, the poor have won a few times and in most of the time, the rich own. Very satirically, Balram said that the defeated poor has left their thoughts in the poems or literary creations which they typically or literally got from their predecessors.

“The history of the world is the history of a ten-thousand-year war of brains between the rich and the poor. Each side is eternally trying to hoodwink the other side: and it has been this way since the start of time. The poor win a few battles (the peeing in the potted plants, the kicking of the pet dogs, etc.) but of course the rich have won the war for ten thousand years. That’s why, one day, some wise men, out of compassion for the poor, left them signs and symbols in poems, which appear to be about roses and pretty girls and things like that, but when understood correctly, spill out secrets that allow the poorest man on earth to conclude the ten-thousand-year-old brain-war on terms favourable to himself.” (p.254)

Again, we get a picture of irony of fate where the kinds of people try to be like one another. The poor think that the rich are very happy since, they have wealth and power, that means enough money, they can do anything they like, anytime and anywhere. Conversely, The rich people also dreams sometimes to be like the poor. Once, Balram took his master to feed some foods in the Dark area, the area of the poor working class people. Mr. Ashok had a very good lunch their and praise the delicious food that he was able to have in very low price. Besides, Balram replied to himself that he also liked the foods of the rich men. They were delicious too. Satirically again, Balram said,

“See, the poor dream all their lives of getting enough to eat and looking like the rich. And what do the rich dream of ?” (p.191)

“Losing weight and looking like the poor.” (p.225)

Furthermore, Adiga has used another satire regarding the issue of the Dogs of a rich family through which, class discrimination has been exposed vividly. In this story, Balram has been to take care of his masters upper-class dogs. He has to wash their whole bodies with several cosmetics and keep them always clean and warm. Plus, he has also to feed timely with rich food that his masters order. Adiga wanted to inform the society that the dogs are considered as humans to the rich people in India whereas the poor have no dog like them. Dog is much important to them than that of the poor class people. They very often treat the working class as their dogs. In fact, it is a catastrophic picture of the miseries of the poor class, the servant class, that they are less important to their masters than that of the pet dogs.

“The rich expect their dogs to be treated like human, you see– they expect their dogs to be pampered, and walked, and petted, and even washed! And guess who had to do the washing? I got down on my knees and began scrubbing the dogs, and then lathering them, and foaming them, and then washing them down, and taking a blow dryer and drying their skin. Then I took them around the compound on a chain while the

king of Nepal sat in a corner and shouted, ‘Don’t pull the chain so hard! They’re worth more than you are!’ (p.78)

However, talking of the city of Delhi, he narrates that the roads and their surroundings are full of indiscipline and mismanagements. People are playing cards sleeping here and there in the garbage sides, and so on and so forth. Indeed, these people have come from the Dark areas. All these pictures represent the poor social managements of the state government of India by which, a person from a rich country may get lost out of discomfort. It will be clear herewith the comments:

“And all the roads look the same, all of them go around and around grassy circles in which men are sleeping or eating or playing cards, and then four roads shoot off from that grassy circle, and then you go down one road, and you hit another grassy circle where men are sleeping or playing cards, and then four more roads go off from it. So you just keep getting lost, and lost, and lost in Delhi.” (p.99)

“Thousands of people live on the sides of the road in Delhi. They have come from the darkness too- you can tell by their thin 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. (p.119-120)

Besides, discrimination is found in the unfolding the pictures of Delhi jails where a large number of convicted drivers are captured for many days. These drivers might not be the criminals because they have come into the jails only to serve their masters’ wills. They serve their masters as the faithful dogs. All the drivers have come to the city just to remove the darkness from their lives but they are being tortured and suffered by the rich class, over and again. In a soliloquy, Balram again said-

“The jails of Delhi are full of drivers who are there behind 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..” (p.145)

Again, we get the shocking insights of the corrupted rich people over the poor. Balram, the narrator of all the things in the fiction, has referred four names- ‘*the Buffalo*’, ‘*the Stork*’, ‘*the Wild Boar*’ and ‘*the Ravan*’, which typically reveal the characters of for torturing men. One of them is the *Wild Boar* who has owned all the cultivatable lands around Laxmangarh. If anyone needs any job to earn money by working on the agricultural lands, he needs to go to him, touch his feet and very respectfully request him to let him work in his fields. But, he will have to pay a certain amount of money from his the daily wages. Here reveals the exploitations towards the poor again. Balram informs the Chinese Premier like-

“Wild Boar who owned all the good agricultural land around Laxmangarh. If you wanted to work on those lands, you had to bow down to his feet, and touch the dust under his slippers, and agree to swallow his day wages. When he passed by women, his car would stop; the windows would roll down to reveal his grin; two of his teeth,

on either side of his nose, were long, and curved, like little tusks.
(p.25)

Later, he criticized the corrupted doctors who pay to the political leaders to get good jobs and other facilities. These corrupted doctors never give much time to the government general hospitals but in the other private hospitals. They can do this kind of activity because they have the shadow power of the local dominant political leaders. They do not have any responsibility to the general people who come to them in the government hospital but they give much importance to the private hospitals. Balram feels all these things because his father had to die for the want of good treatments by these kind of doctor because were in outer services for private income. Again in a soliloquy, Balram satirizes the corrupted doctor which shows the class discrimination clearly-

“Now, you – Dr. Ram Pandey –will kindly put one-third of your salary in my palm. Good boy. In return, I do *this*.’ He made a tick on the imaginary ledger. ‘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.” (p.21)

Thus, the writer has tried to say that most of the people in India is captivated in the rooster coop. They always remain below the level sufficiency and cannot break up the social jail of exploitation.

No. It’s because 66.6 per cent of us are caught in the Rooster Coop just like those poor guys in the poultry market. (p.199)

And, this way, the persons of a certain class are being abused in every sphere of life and they have nothing to do but bear the consequence in their lives. A handful of illiterate people leads all kinds of people. There is nothing to get something good from these ignorant and cunning leaders. They give the words to the people but rejects after getting in their desired positions and they keep doing this over and over again. The ultimate sufferers are nobody but the very common people. Adiga says in the words of Balram that-

“Never before in human history have so few owed so much to so many, Mr. Jiabao. A handful of men in this country have trained the remaining 99.9 percent – 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, he will throw it back at you with a curse. (p.175-176)

CONCLUSION

So, few of the facts above just say on the class discrimination that is engulfing the whole Indian society. People are suffering but the political leaders are enjoying the happiness by torturing and stealing money from them. The unkind low makers are using their tactics and they rich are giving them huge amounts of bribes and other benefits. But, the working class is serving them believing them as their serving masters. Their faiths are running the corrupted rich.

However, the central characters, Balram has witnessed the limitless injustice in the society by the corrupted masters and he wanted to break this social jail. Though he has been successful to reach his goal, he was dishonest and rampant towards corruptions. He is successful in his vicissitude but in a wrong way and that is why, his all actions can never be the examples of a successful man.

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