

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS SATIRE UNDER THE SILENT PENETRATION OF POVERTY AND CLASS DISCRIMINATION: AN EXPLORATION ON ARAVIND ADIGA'S 'THE WHITE TIGER'

Md. Chand Ali

Senior Lecturer in English, Dept. of EEE, Uttara University (UU)

ABSTRACT: *"The White Tiger" is a Man Booker Prize (2008) winning book is written by the great Indian-Australian writer, Aravind Adiga. This article lets us know how the class discrimination is engulfing the Post-Colonial Indian Society under the silent penetration of poverty and corruption and how the human morality is decaying under the religious and political unrests. Here, the narrator and protagonist, Balram Halwai, struggles against his lower class society from the very initial time of his life. His life undergoes with serious sufferings from economical solvency because of being in the lower Hindu cast. He senses the tortures of the elite class people towards the deprived poor. He witnessed the deaths of many dreams in a poor family. He observes it as a "Rooster Coop" that stands for the extreme poverty where the people below the social margin remain in a great danger and never rebel against the society as they have no wealth and power. He scrutinizes the huge corruptions in politics and in every class he went through. As a driver, he has had a great chance to discover the great Indian corruptions on the root levels of cities and towns. His mind always rebels against those terminations but he is to go on as to be alive in his ways of being an enlightened person. Nevertheless, he takes in a great loss of pain but what he has gained at last is nothing but dishonesty and rampancy of corruption because all his perceptions are only for earthly happiness of money. What he got after killing Mr. Ashok and stealing his money (700,000 Rs.) is really a mystery to the readers. Significantly, Aravind Adiga has tried to rectify the human society by upholding the above facts that are running on ahead.*

KEYWORDS: Satire, Politics, Economics, Poverty, Sufferings, Corruption, Discrimination and Nihilism

INTRODUCTION

The White Tiger is the witness of a pointy and conspicuous look upon the contemporary India. The storyteller, Balram Halwai, is the antagonist of the social norms and customs here in this novel, is a substandard young man. By telling the counterfeit, deceiving and utilizing his delicate brainpower, Balram intensified his climbing up to the pinnacle of Bangalore's large dealings in businesses. The novel is a progression of dispatch in black and white in seven nights to the Chinese Premier, Wen Jiabo. Mr. Jiabo is hovered to stop over India to the clandestine of achievement of Indian entrepreneurs. So, the central character, Balram assumes to let him know how to be a triumphant to get power and influence among the people in post colonial India. Getting into the shady heart of India, Balram searches out an interval while he is appointed as a driver for his native wealthiest men. He rebelled against the modern contemporaneousness sitting in front of the wheel of Honda City car. It was nothing but a new rebellion. While his turning through the pages of assassinations of women by rapping or other ways weekly, exchanges for girls, having liquors, and consistencies in Rooster Coop existed in Indian society, he detects his master's bribery at foreign ministries for tax robbery, and taking

part at their own functions in the consideration of so called Rooster Coop. Balram discovered how to possess gas bills, mechanics and replenish and resell the Johnnie Walker bottles in black label. He might have got a way to be free from Rooster Coop in his own ways. Balram's visions infiltrate India as few interlopers' do. And with a magnetism as irrefutable as it is out of the blue, it edifies us that religious conviction doesn't generate virtue, and money does not work out of every predicament but civility can still be brought to light in a corrupt world, and you can win everything out of your thoughts. The White Tiger, Balram, came into this world in some unreservedly impecunious Indian pastoral area where improvement and social equality are still a nature of oblivion. The place where he was born was full of Darkness and poor knowledge. There was not a presence of democracy but of dungeons of corruption, dishonesty, bribery, disproportion, poverty and so on. He got a title as "The White Tiger" while he passed in the short span of his school life. But with the Irony of his fate, he was compelled to be out of the school as his father was died. He became a child labor for serving his family to make both ends meet. In his eyes, India, in his own village, is devoid of all fundamental rights where there is no well treatment for the poor and the elections are openly put together with corruption and hush money. The immoral autocratic of landholders are tyrannical over the poor. Repeatedly, his heart wanted to fly away from his tiny village as his father died out of a good medical treatment. He becomes an eavesdropper that results him to be a simple driver as well as a faithful servant to his master. To him, India is a brutal land of injustice and sordid corruption where the foes, the riches, are the white elephants. (Dr. T. Muraleeswari)

Naxals, a mafia group, by whom there was always a possibility of being kidnapped. So, the people of all classes specially the royal classes have a fear of Naxals. In spite of this adverse situation, the working class people remained dedicated to his master with full servitude. The writer articulates that a handful of people in India are trained to the left, overly into physically powerful, endowed, intellectual personnel in each and every mean to exist in perpetual servitude. In the eyes of Balram, the dependability and the faithfulness of the servants is the foundation of the entire Indian economy- "But he is in the Rooster Coop. The trustworthiness of servants is the basis of the entire Indian economy." (Page: 175) He straightforwardly emphasized that, India has not a despotism or secret police to keep its populace forbiddingly achieving the economic aims. His innovation of "Rooster Coop" is really marvelous that bears the meaning of Darkness and helplessness into the extreme Indian poverty. Balram discovers that all the Delhi drivers are carrying the valuable things like a huge amount of money, bags of diamonds, wines and many more but they never steal those. They remain loyal as usual. Except some dishonest drivers, all are doing best for their masters as a faithful servant just like the situations in a "Rooster Coop" where the hens are slaughtered one after the other and rest of their fellows do nothing but watch and wait thinking that they are their next targets- "The greatest thing to come out of this country in the ten thousand years of its history is the Rooster Coop. Go to Old Delhi, behind the Jama Masjid, and look at the way they keep chickens there in the market. Hundreds of pale hens and brightly colored roosters, stuffed tightly into wire-mesh cages, packed as tightly as worms in a belly, pecking each other and shitting on each other, jostling just for breathing space; the whole cage giving off a horrible stench – the stench of terrified, feathered flesh. On the wooden desk above this coop sits a grinning young butcher, showing off the flesh and organs of a recently chopped-up chicken, still oleaginous with a coating of dark blood. The roosters in the coop smell the blood from above. They see the organs of their brothers lying around them. They know they're next. Yet they do not rebel. They do not try to get out of the coop. The very same thing is done with human beings in this country (Page 173)".

Some researchers think that it is a capital where a man is forced to be a slave. They are their preys that are compelled to be in. Balram was to be a bounded servant since her family had to take loan for his wedding. His whole family members had to work under the rules of the Stork and he also had to leave the school and join in smashing coal and wiping and swiping the tables and rooms. (e.g. page 38). When Kishan his son-in-law came to see him from the Darkness, he thought that he would get many news of his poor Darkness. His granny, Kushum gave her some foods but he thought that that food is full of the sorrows of the darkness. He felt extreme sadness for his own lower class-“There was red, curried bone and flesh in front of me-and it seemed to me that they had served me flesh from Kishan’s own body on that plate.” (Page: 85). This idea or satire is very much similar to the thought of Jonathan Swift as he wrote in his great satire named “A Modest Proposal”-“I am assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London; that a young healthy child, well nursed, is, at a year old, a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food; whether stewed, roasted, baked or boiled, that it will equally serve in a fricassee, or ragout.” (Page: 207). Truly, these two writers have tried to correct the society through their brutal expressions. On the other hand his mind wants to protest those things but remain as silent as the burning ash-“...only a man who is prepared to see his family destroyed- hunted, beaten, and burned by the masters-can break out the coop. (Page-176)

Nihilism is also a part of Adiga’s ideas here in this novel. We know that a man becomes unfaithful to God in a great extent because of the influence of the surroundings. He loses his patients over the nature, above all in God. This is called the Nihilism. In this very story, we find this picture. Balram expresses his great detest on nature, sometimes. He makes some cruel jokes that can go against the law of God in religion. His sense of disbelief in God is vivid here-“There are so many choices. See, the Muslims have one god. The Christians have three gods. And we Hindus have 36,000,000 gods. Making a grand total of 36,000,004 divine arses for me to choose from. (Page- 8). “So I am closing my eyes, folding my hands in a relevant *namaste*, and praying to the gods to shine light on my dark story. Bear with me Mr. Jiabao. This could take a while. How quickly do you think *you* could kiss 36,000.004 arses” (Page- 9). It is noteworthy that the writer has used the small letter ‘g’ in each of the beginning of the word ‘god’. Perhaps he himself is the non believer of God. Sometimes, the idea of God remains as abstract or fake. They think that He is no more and nothing is controlled by Him in this earth. If He did so, there would have no sorrows among the poor. There would have a good justice for all. To them, if there is any God, He is mocking at them (the poor) and trying to make them His loyal servants. To them, God is on the side of the rich men. He never shows mercy upon the feeble ones rather the big guns. Logically, he referred from the poems of ‘Iqbal’ where God is arguing with the Devil, Satan- “*Isn’t it all wonderful? Isn’t it all grand? Aren’t you grateful to be my servant?*” (Page-88). Plus, “*God says: I am powerful. I am huge. Become my servant again.*” *Devil says: Ha!*” Here, God may be a dictator. Sometimes, Arvind is direct to say against the prayers for God by a poor person- “I thought there was no need to offer a prayer to the gods for him,... What can a poor man’s prayers mean to the 36,000,004 in comparison with those of the rich?” (Page: 317) Philosophically speaking, sometimes human minds lose patience upon God being hit by the poverty and it results nothing but frustration. It is nothing but senselessness and dark feelings of mind. A mind can be deceived anyhow but nobody should go beyond the natural law. A senseless man can do this out of fury but it should not be a philosophy. In the eyes of Adiga, the idea of God has been almost an absurd thing to the deprived poor. The Humanity is losing faith upon the existence of God. He has expressed this notion through the characteristic of a man again- “I see the little man in the khaki uniform *spitting* at God again and again, as I watch the black blades of the midget fan slice the light from the chandelier again and again.” (Page: 88). The writer has compared the light to the

beliefs of God here that are breaking down and attaching up again and again under the influence of poverty, the man in khaki dress. He also gave an idea that the people living in the darkness are very religious because they have no ambition except eating good foods- "The villagers are so religious in the Darkness." (Page: 90) They like to be mentally peaceful and happy remaining very simple and it is really difficult to be a simple man because man is sinful by birth and selfish by nature. In addition, the writer has again drawn a contradictory religious picture where a Muslim is doing a driving job disguised as a Hindu named 'Ram Prasad' because the masters will not like the Muslims as their employee. Aravind again referred a story he watched, to Mr. Premier- "A great film, sir. Lots of dancing. Hero was a Muslim. Name Mohammad Mohammad. 'Now, this Mohammad Mohammad was a poor, honest hardworking Muslim, but he wanted a job at the home of an evil, prejudiced landlord who didn't like Muslims- just to get a job and feed his starving family, he claimed to be a Hindu! And took the name of Ram Persad.'" (Page: 109) Indeed, it is a pathetic story of extreme poverty that affects on the religious beliefs. So, this or that way, Nihilism is embedded in the hearts of the people that are also discussed more hereinafter.

Nevertheless, we know that Balram is a very honest man. When he starts driving their car, he never demanded money willingly even after the month is in an end as he would think that they are their parents there- "You are like a father and mother to me, and how can I ask for money from my parents?" (Page: 65) He worked there not only as a driver but also as cooker, massager, sweeper etc. He was very simple and honest man. When he wore the driving uniform, he felt proud in him. So, it is clear that that city is bad place where the simple people turn to be the slave and these exploitations make invigilates the underprivileged culture and fashions inferiority complexness amongst the deprived people. Living in village Balram was not introduced with the sophisticated cultures. As a result he had to lead a poor way of life. To the royal class he was an "Uncivilized Monkey"- You are so filthy! Look at you,... and get out." (Page: 146). He rubs his groin and by no means brushes his teeth as his family had never trained these things. He repented stating- "Why had my father never told me not to scratch my groin? Why had my father never taught me to brush in milky foam? Why had he raised me to live like an animal? Why do all the poor live in such filth, such ugliness?" (Page: 151) Often, he compares himself as well as the lower class people with dogs and generates his thoughts through that- "...I could understand what he wanted to say, the way dogs understand their masters." (Page: 112) So, these are the exploitations simply found in Balram's poverty.

Delhi is the capital and economic center of all India where simple man are treated like an animal. It becomes clear when Balram was treated badly without a shoe while entering the shopping mall. A poor man with sandals in his legs is strictly prohibited to enter there. It is nothing but a cultural gap where the poor are deprived of many things. It may have a difference also in economics of India. But Balram is a man in exception. He knew how to tackle that situation. He bought white T-shirt and entered into the mall. As long as he was there, he saw everything is artificial as if there was a chain covered around there. He called it as "the fugitive life".

Next, propensity of migration is very common feature of Globalization. As a result, all the village people are now busy in migrating to the capital cities. They think that the cities are the places where people can find the Light of everything. And this changing trend is increasing rapidly throughout the whole world. India is not out of this influence. Here, the people like Balram or Ram Persad have come to Delhi to serve his hungry families. It is now a common and social phenomenon of India- "They were all headed from the Darkness to Delhi. You'd

think the whole world was migrating.” (Page: 111) But, coming here, they are to suffer in the long run because here, everything goes under the extreme systems of class discriminations that we found so far.

Besides, sense of corruption is a very secrete and silent process of finishing any work. He drove the car in the red light areas and saw that Mongoose, brother of Mr. Ashok is meeting here and there taking the money as loan from the bank and giving them among the several political leaders to lessen them the yearly Car Taxes. Besides, there is nobody to look after the poor and deprived Delhi children who are the dedications under the wheels of the Honda City Car, the car of Pinky Madam. They sacrifice their lives unknowingly for the shakes of the royalty. The lives of the children are valueless to them- "What are these children doing, walking about Delhi at one in the morning, with no one to look after them?" Then, Mr. Ashok asks, "...you know how those people in the darkness are: they have eight, nine, ten children-sometimes they don't know the names of their own children.” (Page: 165)

Politically, India is much corrupted as it is described in this book. Here there are so many socialist parties who are busy in making corruption in several ways. Specially, it occurs with the issue of the Ganga River. They promise to keep people happy with Ganga but change immediately after winning in elections. Every people now knows it but they are the sufferers in the long run and it is happening each and every ear of elections- “Would they beat the Great Socialist and win the elections? Had they raised enough money of their own, and bribed enough policemen, and bought enough fingerprints of their own, to win?” (Page: 98) So, form the following lines, it is very clear that there creates a huge corruption while India is in front any elections. After that, the policemen are found to be much corrupted all over India. They are found involved directly or indirectly with many evil activities where they really should not be. The writer has cleared it well, “One morning I saw a policeman writing a slogan on the wall outside the temple with a red paintbrush: DO YOU WANT GOOD ROADS, CLEAN WATER, GOOD HOSPITALS? THEN VOTE OUT THE GREAT SOCIALIST!” (Page: 98). Besides, in voting, we find this pictures very often that one person is voting many times at the same election. It happens regularly in all democratic elections- “I’ve seen twelve elections-five general, five state, two local-and someone else has voted for me twelve times.” (Page: 100) It is really shameful for a democratic country. Indeed, the heart of India is really filthy with limitless corruptions and illegalities that really need to be concluded. The writer also has a great abhorrence on democratic systems-“-we have this fucked-up system called parliamentary democracy. Otherwise, we’d be just like China-’ ” (Page: 156). Probably, he prefers the socialism like China.

Now let us detect the sufferings of Delhi drivers like Balram. Mukesh, along with Mr. Ashok yearns for Balram to have surrendered by himself for the accident done by grumpy Pinky Madam, wife of Mr. Ashok in a dark night. She killed a poor child while driving the car at the dead of night in Delhi road. But, they are now imposing everything on Balram making him understand that this is the only path of negotiating this problem taking it onto him, Balram. Truly, there are a huge number of drivers like Balram who are passing their dark days in prison cells being convicted by the exploiters. Anyway, they even compel Kushum to watch their forced crimes that is not done by the innocent Balram. Indeed, uncivilized and inhuman people are using the poverty as their tools in the veil of globalization. They are doing murders and playing with the fates of the poor measuring with their black moneys. So, this is a hurting picture of the poor and poor drivers who are confessing a lie to the police for the shakes of their masters otherwise, getting murdered or tortured like Balram.

On the other hand, they are not paying the drivers as they really need. They are stealing from them like the big beggars or robbers. They are paying low and capitalizing high stealing the labors of the hungry poor people whose lives remain always in agony. In this system, the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer. Disrespect is spreading out among these two classes. They are getting tyrannical against each others that results nothing but anarchy. In fact, this cannot be called a good democracy. So, it creates nothing to the poor except revulsions. Here, the sense and importance of money is the root of all evils-“Amazing how much money they have, And yet they treat us like animals.” (Page 207) It is because money has made Balram greedy and corrupted and Mr. Ashok missing of his valuable life. The poor remain reckless and the rich desperate. Thus, the mentality of Balram got a changing trend and he planned to kill or to be killed to make an economic solvency as well as a freedom of life. So, he started walking in the Dark ways of immorality, bribery, dishonesty, and flattery. When he heard that 17 people of a lower class family have been murdered in the north Indian village, he prayed for his family members from the bottom of his heart as he is also into this kind of torture. From that moment, he stopped reading the news papers for the few months and an unknown evil thought blows through his all mind. He also remains alert of the wrong doings and mistreatments done by the dishonest poor. Next, he planned to kill his own master Mr. Ashok who has no major fault and snatch the red bag full of huge amount of money in the hope of being a rich man through entrepreneurship. Later, he becomes associated with the outsourcing at Bangalore and vehicles. So, he became the working class hero who is comparable to The White Tiger as it comes only one in an era. Likewise, there are very few people who can be the rich men after long planes like Balram. But killing a man in a wrong way is an injustice and it is wrong to say any killer as a hero. Then, it will corrupt the senses of moral human beings.

But one day, the true revolution might come out, throughout the world as the allegorical poem says,

“If these poor beasts ever lift up their heads,
Mankind would, then, forget all deeds of rebellion.
If they decide, they can own the universe,
Even chew down the bones of their cruel masters.
Just make them aware of their degradation so deep
Just make them move their tail that has fallen asleep.”

(The name of the poem is “Dogs” is written by Faiz Ahmed Faiz, a Pakistani political and intellectual writer. It is *Translated by Sain Sucha*.)

L. Ithaya Venthen has tried to narrate it that though the finishing is not a flawlessly contented, it gives the impressions of hope. Balram creates it out of deficiency of poverty, but he does not turn into desensitize and detachment from where he came up to and this lets him to proceed as like as he (Balram) proclaims-“Now, despite my amazing success story, I don’t want to lose contact with the places where I got my real education in life. The road and the pavement” (P: 302)

Neither he wants to loss his past nor to go to jail now. He will get nothing else if he is on the way of rectifying himself by handing over to the police. So, he wants to proceed on avoiding the sense of morality. To him, there is no value of morality in this earthly life which will keep him in the Darkness of poverty. He tries to give a new message to the new generations to go ahead leaving some immoralities though there may have guiltiness inside the minds- “If I go to jail, he loses his ice cream and glasses of milk, doesn’t he? That must be his thinking. The

New generation, I will tell you, is growing up with no morals at all.” (Page: 316) Paradoxically, he thinks that many a murdering is needed to be a great man. The men who have reached at the top of successes have murdered someone openly or secretly. This practice is running on from generation to generation. So, he tries to suggest Mr. Premier- “Kill enough people and they will put up bronze statues to you near Parliament House in Delhi – but that is glory, and not what I am after. All I wanted was the chance to be a man – and other for that, one murder was enough.” (Page: 318) Besides, he has also the mental sufferings because there goes a sentence that the man who is bad has the penetration for that. He has also this sense of self realization that is called regeneration also. He wanted to be a very good man to come out from the Darkness to Light but could not do so and to do something very good for the country but failed as he was a poor guy. Now, he wants to say him that he is a successful man because his heart is so thirsty to feel like that-“Why not? Am I not a part of all that is changing this country? Haven’t I succeeded in the struggle that every poor man here should be making – the struggle not to take the lashes your father took,... True, there was the matter of murder – which is a wrong thing to do, no question about it. It has darkened my soul. All the skin whitening creams sold in the market of India won’t clean my hands again.” (Page: 318) This line is very much similar to the repenting words of Lady Macbeth, written by Shakespeare, who was sinful with the blood of King Duncan. She thought that the blood of the late king Duncan will not affect anything in her mind but she as well as Macbeth becomes the ultimate sufferers. Her tongue utters the following lines after her fearful thoughts full of sins as it is in Balram’s words above- “All the perfumes of Arabia couldn’t make my little hand smell better.” (Macbeth, Scene-1 Act-5, Page -108). Even in the last hours, Balram did not change and thought that he is right in him for what he has done so far.

Arvind may be an escapist who does not want to be a simple man like others in this earth. He might be an atheist or apostate or a stranger in human society who does not act upon the earthly commandments and go against the abstract thoughts of God. From the beginning to the last of the letter to Mr. Premier, he thought that he was totally right in what he had done- “I will never say I made a mistake that night when I slit my master’s throat.” (Page: 321) But the readers of our society will not be agreed with him. His ideology can be compared to the words of Meursault, the protagonist of the novel named “The Outsider” that is written by the Algerian writer, Albert Camus. In this story, Meursault killed an Arab and fired twice more on the dead body without any reason. In the trial of judiciaries, he answered in his own style for the questions whether he was right or wrong for the killing of that man and not believing in the existence of God - “I’d been right, I was still right, I was always right. I’d passed my life in a certain way, and I might have passed it in a different way, if I’d felt like it. (Page: 74) Adiga may have thought like Meursault- “I told him not to waste his rotten prayers on me; it was better to burn than to disappear.” (Page: 74) Finally, Meursault was proved as a Nihilist with his final words before execution- “But, apparently, he had more to say on the subject of God. I went close up to him and made a last attempt to explain that I’d very little time left, and I wasn’t going to waste it on God.” (Page: 74) A disbelief in the existence of God may be the characteristic of existentialism also. “I didn’t believe in God. (Page: 72)” however, for such a total rejection of a divine presence Meursault can be closer to a nihilist, that asserts that there is no evidence of creator or extraterrestrial ruler and even if there is someone, man is not compelled to obey his or her rules. Arvind may have found any solution against the lines of Fyodor Dostoyevsky also- “If God is not existed, everything is permitted.” He thought that his murder is also permitted as he has also confusion in the deeds of 36,000,004 gods.

CONCLUSION

So, at the eleventh hour, it is worth mentioning that human life is full of sufferings. From the beginning of human civilization, everything has been created through the mental suffering of humanity. Even in this modern age, sufferings are very common to all humanity. As a result, man is not completely happy in this earthly life. But, it is true that we are the causes of sufferings because we are doing wrong things to make us free as a means of mental or physical happiness. It does not bear an eternal peace rather it brings an ultimate penetration in our present life. There may be the distinctions among the several social classes but we should not go with the intolerable or immeasurable ways in the quest of peace or happiness. Our life would be enlightened if we could feel the good avoiding the tremendous problems. Unlike Balram, we have to stop our wrongdoings helping the society to be peaceful. Only after that, the human sorrows or sufferings can be finished up. He has broken the law of nature. It cannot be a way of getting redemption from Darkness to Light. It creates nothing but more frustration in one's mind. The path of reaching at Light could be some others. Somebody may assume the point that this is the way how he, Balram, the narrator tried to rebel against the exploited and corrupted elite class. But murdering cannot be the right way. It is nothing but killing all humanity is also Nihilism. He is really dishonest in this activity as it is in politics. Though he has been a successful entrepreneur till the last, his success is full of heinous attempts that put up with no constructive elucidation for the society. Aravind Adiga may have tried to push a message to the civilization that this clash between two cultures and the class discriminations amongst the human races are running on desperately and they need a demarcation. So, it can rightly be said that politically and socially, Aravind has powerfully satirized against the Indian political and economical unrests existed in class discriminations that kill the society under the toxicities of poverty- "That is the whole tragedy of this country"- (page 10). So, the writer is tremendously successful in presenting all these things so far to make the society aware and he feels like to be a philanthropist and wants a peaceful society for all- "It may be turn out to be decent city where human can live as like human and animal can live like animals." (Page-318).

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