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Identity Crisis in Aravind Adiga's The White Tiger

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Abstract

Adiga possesses an intriguing talent. It is an outstanding, satirical tale that criticizes so-called wealthy people. The home nation has traditionally been portrayed as a place of cruel injustice and heinous corruption, where the poor are constantly dispossessed and victimized by their long-standing adversaries, the wealthy. It fully elevates a lowly servant named Balram Halwai alias Munna, who is the novel's protagonist. The tale depicts the standards of poor people, which is quite heartwarming. Everyone in our world seeks identity or existence. The White Tiger tells the story of a rickshaw puller's son. Balram Halwai, alias Munna, searches for his true identity. Balram, the protagonist in this story, is a victim of identity who worked out his low caste and encountered invisible iron curtains, ruled his family in the past, and achieved his major goal by assassinating his own master, looting all the money, and eventually becoming a successful businessman. Balram Halwai struggled to recognize his own identity. The novel's protagonist, Balram Halwai, is always eager to escape the bonded labor. The caste-based labor system exists in all four directions of the earth. It is widespread throughout society; in addition, other writers have chosen to remain anonymous, proving that it is not exclusive to Balram. Particularly in several state coastal locations where the Odisha Government classified low caste men and women are paid pitiful pay for performing customary chores. This system is an excellent illustration of oppression and suppression, and it reflects the traits of Balram Halwai, the protagonist of this book. Balram is not a good thinker and is unable to think on his own, but he is an excellent listener. He changed his career to become a driver because he used to listen intently.

Keywords: - Identity, society, caste system, oppression and suppression

Introduction: - A unique and dangerous creature in the jungle, the white tiger stands out from other animals in the area. Like the White Tiger, Balram Halwai aspires to be an independent man and to make India become a scary, nasty nation where the impoverished have very little political freedom, particularly in places like Bihar. Despite being the most democratic country in the world, India still has widespread poverty, illiteracy, humiliation, subpar living conditions, malnutrition, and illnesses. The wealthy are grasping hold of their lives. They make no requests for authority or freedom to act. The central theme of Adiga's novels is that, despite India's economic development, the impoverished continue to live in poverty. Adiga's focus on the nation's voting system is appropriate; minor temptations lead the impoverished to sell their votes. Balram was determined to break out from his impoverished upbringing and climb the social ladder to gain the vitality he had sorely needed from the start.

This novel's scenario is based on a preexisting framework, and Balram struggles against how things are usually expected to turn out. In the general population, your chances of growing up impoverished outweigh your chances of belonging to the working class, let alone being wealthy, in the unlikely event that you do. The structure that prevents people from rejecting the standard is debased. Given how little respect the impoverished receive, Balram's search for a way out is understandable. Given that the book's focus is Balram's attempt at independence, the title makes sense. Like a white tiger, he is the odd man out and will go against the grain to become a corporate visionary. He witnesses the moment when he is in uniform, looking at the location of his former self and his current self. The novel has an academic, almost treatise-like, writing style. Balram separates people based on their level of wealth. Wealthy people are referred to as the "India of Darkness" by him, whereas those who are not are called the "India of Lightness." He was raised by a large family, his grandfather was a driver, and his mother passed away when he was a small child. The Halwais appear to be a rather underprivileged community.

After getting his driver's license, he starts looking for work straight away. It was lucky for him that Ashok took him on. Subsequently, Balram murders Ashok to obtain his money. Balram narrates the incidents leading up to the Laxmangarh election, which featured a match between

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the leader of the Darkness and the great socialist. Balram kills Ashok and then heads toward Bangalore. Dharam, his relative, is with him. In addition, he is carrying the red sack that holds the master's cash. He notices the police's billboard about his posture at the train station in Hyderabad. Before agreeing to work as a transporter for companies that outsource their services, he bribes a police officer.

The White Tiger muses about the process we call existence in the novel's final scene. This book provides a thorough analysis of every facet of Indian society. The White Tiger tells the tale of a man on his quest for independence. Throughout the book, the main character Balram Halwai corresponds with visiting Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao via some letters. A farm boy named Balram Halwai, who narrates the book in retrospect, provides a darkly comic perspective on class strife in an increasingly interconnected world. Peerzada Abrar claims that Mr. Wen Jiabo, the prime minister of China, visits Bangalore, the center of information technology, to meet with young Indian entrepreneurs.

Mr. Wen and Balram Halwai are introduced during the Bangalore summit. As a self-taught entrepreneur and "thinking man of action and changes," Balram describes himself as superior to anyone who has received formal schooling. Munna (Balram) tells Mr. Wen his story. He says that he is from the poor Bihar hamlet of Laxmangarh. His parents were impoverished, but they never begged for money. Vikram Halwai, his father, fought against fate by pursuing his son's schooling and pulling rickshaws. To pay off debts from his uncle's marriage, he worked at the tea company. He came to realize that throughout his employment at the tea company, he had become entangled in a merciless cycle of exploitation. In his life, he needs to appear appealing. Resuming his testimony, Balram stated that on the second night, he had murdered his owner, Mr. Ashok. He continued living his life after his father's death, leaving his position as a tea shop waitress to pursue his studies in more advanced economic driving.

The life of Thakur Ramdev, also known as The Stork, brought him to the Dhanbad city's "Laxmangarh" mansion. When Mr Ashok was successful in nominating Stork's son as a driver, he was ecstatic not to have to search for food, shelter, or a uniform. Back at his master's house, Balram talked about the distinctions between caste and class. The world is out of balance because Balram created it. The Chinese Prime Minister and Balram discussed India's illustrious democracy. His concepts are unconventional. He is a fan of Fidel Castro since he has pledged to expel the poor from Cuba. Balram describes how the electoral process and democracy in Laxmangarh are managed by the Chinese Prime Minister.

Balram travelled to New Delhi with his boss Mr. Ashok and his wife Pinky to help with illicit mining. Balram thinks that everyone finds it difficult to fit in with the culture. Balram stands for the dishonest side of the New Delhi government. He witnessed the opulent life of both profound anguish and prosperity among the poor. Higher officials are paid by corrupt bosses to do what they want. According to Balram, the ten thousand-year battle of ideas between the rich and the poor is the tale of the world. Every party is constantly attempting to deceive the other side (Adiga, 2005: 254). Through his fellow drivers, Balram gained insight into dealing with society, the weather, crooked authorities, dishonest police officers, and miserly bosses. Pinky Madam's drunkenness is what led to the accident, and Balram is to blame.

The horrific event taught Balram that his master is not very kind. Balram then goes on to talk about his conversations with Mr. Wen and explains something that happened in his master Ashok's home. When Ashok leaves for America, his wife Pinky Madam asks Balram to drop her off at the airport without alerting her husband. Balram dropped her at the airport. A big brown packet containing 4700 rupees was given to him as payment. His master's wrath for his negligence welcomed him upon his return from the airport.

Despite his innocent plea, his attempt to beg was unsuccessful. Pinky Madam is gone, thus Mr. Ashok is by himself. This situation made Mr. Ashok's life lonely and uncomfortable. He was attracted to call ladies since he was lonely and frequently went to malls and hotels to relax. Mr. Ashok fulfilled his suppressed desire for revenge by searching the red-light area for prostitutes.

Balram saw the differences in wealth and poverty. He thinks that the variations will soon be



overthrown by a working-class revolt. Balram remarks, Do you know anything about the Naxals? They have an entire army and firearms. They're becoming more powerful every day. When the time comes, India as a whole (Adiga, 208) Balram turns resentful of the wealthy. Balram informs the Chinese Premier, on the sixth night, about how he started to con his master for money. His appetite grew, and he finally decided to murder his lord. With all of his money, he set out into the future and built an unmatched persona. Balram left the crime site, managed to elude detection, and eventually made his way to Bangalore.

He decided to provide contact center employees with a taxi service. He followed in the footsteps of his employer, buying off politicians and law enforcement to push out rivals in his industry. He takes over a large company with dozens of drivers and a fleet of SUVs very rapidly. He remarks: I wasn't by myself. Thousands were on my side! When you go to Bangalore, you will see my friends—bulky, chubby men who harass and threaten vendors with canes in exchange for money. Of course, I'm taking off the police (Adiga, 299–300).

Balram gives up on ethics and morality in his quest to find his true self. He claims to have been the architect of the new India. He said that unless a poor individual starts advocating for himself, that won't happen. According to Robbie Goh, Balram Halwai tells it like it is—with unnerving frankness—how he evolved from being a country yokel to becoming a clever businessman with vicious goals. He serves as India's Everyman's official spokesperson." Balram Halwai's protagonist battles identity, slavery from antiquity, and corruption.

He vented his intense distaste and rage at the "haves." Balram does a masterful job of illuminating prejudice towards social issues and racial issues in culture. Adiga portrays both destitute, ugly areas such as Delhi and Bangalore. The daily bread and butter still matters to the underprivileged. The White Tiger lacks experience and has difficulty getting noticed. In the text, Balram tells Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao about his seven-night sojourn. He spends his early years learning to rebel against the landlord's laws. Balram can't remember his true name from childhood. His parents dubbed him Munna, saying, "Munna? That name isn't authentic. It simply means "boy," and he was correct (Adiga, 2008: 13).

The authorities and professors regularly commend him for his genuineness in his academic pursuits. The School Inspector asks, "What is the rarest animal in any jungle animals that only appears once in a generation? After giving it some thought, I remarked, The White Tiger, that's what you are in this jungle (Adiga, 2008: 35). Balram asserts that development and progress have not been equally spread throughout Delhi, Bangalore, and Laxmangarh since India's independence. The location of Laxmangarh is difficult to distinguish from the other popular locations on the map.

Balram and his brother Kishan joined the store because their family's poverty and squalor kept them from finishing their education. His dream comes true when he gets hired by a wealthy landlord to look after his two Pomeranian dogs and drive his child around. "His eyes seemed full of wonder," Adiga remarks. How could the same soil, sunlight, and water produce two such different human specimens? They are unidentified and unacknowledged in the human world. When it came to birth and death, they were compared to animals. Balram decided that he would not die a servant, a driver, or a poor-born member of the Halwai tribe. He finds it difficult to establish a new persona as a wealthy man. In "The White Tiger," Balram's grandmother, Pinky Madam, Mr. Ashok, Kusum, and other people fight for their values, way of life, and sense of identity. The main character, Balram, makes a snap decision. He thought about robbing Mr. Ashok and taking money to launch his own business. He successfully implemented his plan and made a name for himself as a successful businessman in Bangalore.

He did the crime to further his independence. They can even gnaw on the bones of their ruthless overlords if they so choose. They can even dominate the universe. In the novel *The White Tiger*, Adiga spoke up to alert the societal elites to the potential risks associated with repressing the weak. Adiga makes a strong point: if the oppression and supremacy keep up, people may start committing crimes. Even though he isn't at his best, the jersey represents that he has, in a sense, beaten the system. This minute was probably quite significant for both Balram and the plot.



Reverting to self-reliance and applying unconventional thinking, he fulfilled his commitments and, although he may not be where he would have preferred to be, he accomplished his singular goal. Bonded labor is a terrible practice and a major representation of slavery. labor that is bonded conventionally. The study is gathering data from official sources and doing fieldwork. The protagonist of Balram Halwai's novel *White Tiger* is like a bond laborer in certain aspects. Now and then, he has the impression that he works hard for very little pay, which makes him steal from and assign his boss. As a driver, Balram Halwai was dubbed a "country mouse" by the community. Balram Halwai turned into a heartless and ruthless man over time. The protagonist of Balram Halwai's novel *White Tiger* is like a bond laborer in certain aspects. Now and then, he has the impression that he works hard for very little pay, which makes him steal from and assign his boss. As a driver, Balram Halwai was dubbed a "country mouse" by the community. Balram Halwai turned into a heartless and ruthless man over time. His identity was stolen by unscrupulous individuals due to his lack of character and the actions of the elite groups (Adiga 64).

The society is greatly impacted by these lines. Balram lost his identity in an attempt, at all costs, to prove his existence. He wishes not to pass away as a T.B. patient like his father did. It has been demonstrated once more to be content with what you have. In today's environment, persecution and oppression are quite regular occurrences. Visible in the so-called modern day are caste, creed, racism, classism, inequality, and humiliation. Again, there is proof that you should be happy with what you have. Persecution and tyranny are rather commonplace in today's world. The concepts of caste, creed, racism, classism, injustice, and humiliation are all quite evident in the so-called modern world. Thus, the issue of development is crucial. How much longer will this last? Violence and social boycotts have reached their peak.

Adiga draws attention to the growing divide between the rich and the poor at this specific point in time. Writers like me must work to draw attention to the heinous injustice of society at a time when China and India are expected to inherit the globe from the West and are going through significant transformations of their own (Raj, 116). The protagonist of the book, Balram Halwai, develops into a capable professional who is occupied in his office dealing with challenging circumstances. He brings to mind the following paraphrasing of a poem by poet Mirza Ghalib about slaves: "They stay slaves because they are unable to recognize beauty in the world" (Adiga, 2008: 40). His unwavering quest for freedom manifested itself as an outing to his hometown, which he took while Pinky Madam and Mr. Ashok were given a tour. Balram Halwai believed he was imprisoned like a parrot.

For this reason, he longs to be free. For me, it was a significant trip. For the first time, I walked up the hill, went through the pond, and entered the Black Fort. Setting foot on the wall, my tiny Laxmangrah gazed down at the community. I noticed the market and the temple tower. It appeared to be the most exquisite sight on the planet. I discovered my village from the fort's edge, and after that, I performed certain things that are too repulsive to tell you about. Well, to be honest, I kept spitting. I want to go back down the hill, wishing and humming after that. I sat on Mr. Ashok's throat eight months later (Adiga, 41-21). Adiga paints a very realistic picture of the hero, one who plots his crime years in advance. His disgusting habit of constantly spitting at his home hamlet of Laxmangarh may be the last rejection of all he values in an attempt to escape the unhappy rooster coop. He learned about crime by reading murder stories every week, just like drivers do to pass the time. Naturally, a billion servants have covert fantasies of strangling their employers; for this reason, the Indian government distributes the magazine and sells it for just four and a half rupees on the streets, making it affordable for even the poor (Adiga, 125).

Ashok, the lord of Balram Halwai, had resided in one of Delhi's top apartments, Buckingham Towers a Block, a brand-new building. Balram's job as a driver is limited to driving; in addition, he must perform several tasks unrelated to his line of business. This circumstance demonstrates the elite group's mindset and attitude towards the underprivileged. Balram Halwai is treated like



a servant by his master Ashok, who makes him perform all the work in exchange for a small salary. He needs to be named in a variety of ways if something goes wrong. They're going to call him a lot of names. In the past, Ashok, his wife, Mongoose, and Pinky Madam used to spend most of their time at malls.

In addition to driving, Balram's duties included carrying all of the shopping bags that his employers had purchased. The scenario where Balram Halwai loses a rupee coin and Mongoose beats him up for not finding it when he was getting out of the automobile illustrates the cruel and stingy mindset of the wealthy. Balram's owner, Ashok, was displeased that he had lost a rupee coin following a million-rupee bribe: It demonstrates how enraged and jealous the rich are of the poor.

The belief is that Balram Halwai will become a millionaire if he discovers the lost rupee currency. The impoverished must put up with all forms of mistreatment and insults. Within the novel, there are numerous instances of humiliation. When masters teach their servants dos and don'ts, their immoral behavior doesn't end there. Get on your hands and knees and search the car's floor for it: I did just that. Like a hound, I searched between the matting for that one rupee by sniffing. What do you mean that it isn't present? Just because you're in the city doesn't mean you can rob us. That rupee is what I want. Mukesh, we just paid a bribe of half a million rupees, and now we're taking advantage of him for just one rupee. Come on, let's go have a scotch.

Adiga's *White Tiger* serves as numerous examples of how the wealthy mistreat the underprivileged in the guise of education. Balram Halwai specifically attempts to explain a few English words. When Balram Halwai mispronounced "Maal" for "Mall," Ashok and Pinky Madam had a great time. They also engaged in some visual perversion, which provided another instance of their sardonic laughing, and the pizza scenario was almost exactly like the one before. Balram dressed up like a Maharaja, complete with a red turban and cooling goggles, to celebrate Pinky Madam's birthday and give them lunch. Adiga's *White Tiger* serves as numerous examples of how the wealthy mistreat the underprivileged in the guise of education. Balram Halwai specifically attempts to explain a few English words. When Balram Halwai mispronounced "Maal" for "Mall," Ashok and Pinky Madam had a great time.

They also engaged in some visual perversion, which provided another instance of their sardonic laughing, and the pizza scenario was almost exactly like the one before. Balram dressed up like a Maharaja, complete with a red turban and cooling goggles, to celebrate Pinky Madam's birthday and give them lunch. Pinky Madam killed a man on the road while driving while intoxicated and used that information to blackmail Balram Halwai. Balram Halwai was victimized by circumstances even though he had nothing to do with the event. He has been humiliated by Pinky Madam and Ashok Sir, his masters. He was forced to sign the declaration, which admitted his complete culpability for the mishap.

God Almighty, I swear that I have not been coerced into making this declaration, nor have I received any instructions from anyone (Adiga, 168). God Almighty, I swear that I have not been coerced into making this declaration, nor have I received any instructions from anyone (Adiga, 2008: 168). The mental case is empowered to submit to acts that many people's souls would not permit by this wanton way of thinking. Sociopaths, who are impulsive, charming, manipulative, impatient, and inclined to go for broke, are another name for insane individuals.

Balram Halwai's actions and reactions are a product of his situation. There is no way out of the never-ending existential crisis he is experiencing. This essay aims to depict the novel's protagonist's profound sense of social marginalization and his nameless existence, which forces him to look for his true identity. Rather than writing from the perspective of the rich, as in Salman Rushdie and Amitabh Ghosh's novels, the author appears to have attempted to emphasize social exclusion and marginality from the perspective of the disadvantaged. The chapter discusses the terrible and wretched life of the character as a result of his marginalized and socially excluded status. The author uses an episodic narrative in *The White Tiger*. Readers are exposed to the protagonist's nameless and pointless existence through flashbacks.



Conclusion: - Ironically, despite being malnourished, ill-dressed, and desperately poor, the boy is named Balram and subsequently *The White Tiger* to reflect his exceptional potential. The irreversible divide between the rich and poor groups is illustrated in the second section of the study. *The White Tiger* appears to be a product of growing social inequality in Indian culture. Remarks made by Raymond Williams: "Inequalities between classes are the main cause of inequality in class societies. Thus, in what is still to be acknowledged as a comprehensive process, Gramsci brought the essential recognition of domination and subordination (Williams, 108). Balram Halwai, the main character of *The White Tiger*, is a low-caste talent who is too low class to challenge the landowner's oppressive tactics on behalf of the wealthy class. In actuality, Ashok Sharma represents the world's bourgeois ways, whereas Balram represents the proletariat. The main focus of the narrative is the ongoing interplay between these opposing forces. The entire book is a merciless account of Balram, the servant, living under the oppressive control of Mr. Ashok Sharma, the owner. Therefore, the novel's dialectic arises from the relationships between the haves and have-nots, employers and employees, and the bourgeois and proletariat.

Balram Halwai, lamenting his father's rickshaw-puller poverty and privations, explodes at the current class tensions in India. "There used to be a thousand castes and destinies in India," he states. Men with big bellies and men with small stomachs are the only two classes that exist today. And only two possible outcomes: either eat or be consumed (Adiga, 2008: 64). Similar to Mulk Raj Anand's *Munoo*, Balram Halwai acknowledges that the impoverished are always being exploited by the rich, a phenomenon known as slavery.

Balram feels like a servant who must bear the consequences of his master's mistakes without any fault of his own. Drivers are incarcerated in Delhi's jails because they are holding their middle-class, well-meaning masters accountable. Hence the rebel in him boils with fury and he cannot help sharing his excruciating agony with Mr. Jiabao, the Premier of the Socialist Republic of China: Never before in human history have so few owed so much to so many. 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 and the will throw it back at you with a curse. (Adiga, 176).

Thus, Balram, who initially arrives in Dhanbad, Delhi, and Bangalore as a servant, rises to the position of master and becomes the owner with his freedom and uniqueness. However, he does not reject his humanitarian qualities humbleness, kindness, and simplicity like the snooty affluent. I was a driver for a master once, but now that I am a master of drivers, I don't treat them like servants I don't slap, harass, or make fun of anyone," he states. I also don't name any of them my "family" in an attempt to offend them (Adiga 302). Ashok Sharma, North Indian entrepreneur settled in Bangalore" is how he describes himself these days (Adiga, 302).

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