
An Analysis of *The White Tiger* in the Perspective of Theory of Desire

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Abstract

The White Tiger by Arvind Adiga is a masterpiece that reflects the social and economic context of contemporary India. It portrays the life of Balram Halwai who, in an effort to be able to live, strives untiringly for a better life. The deep gulf of poverty in which he lives makes his task even harder. He refuses to surrender in the face of fate in order not to live like an animal and sets for himself the goals of life. Eventually, he is able to get himself out of the deep gulf of the poverty-stricken cycle of life and moves to Delhi with his master. Everything he sees there becomes an object to imitate. This article would study the novel from the perspective of desire theory and analyze how desire affects the protagonist and society as a whole and how corruption is triggered by the role of desire. This paper analyzes the critical division of society in the Light and Dark governed by desire.

Keywords: India; Corruption; Desire; Morality; Social division;

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Introduction

The White Tiger is Man Booker Prize-winning novel by Arvind Adiga that shows the social stratification rooted deep in Indian society. Arvind Adiga is an Indo-Australian writer, a journalist who has a keen observation skill that comes into play very well in his debut epistolary novel that chronicles the life story of Balram; the representative of Proletariat, who is an individual and class as well, as he shares his fate of belonging to the lower class. Balram; the servant wittingly rises in power benefitting from his nothingness and speaks to China's premier about his 'higher' agenda by choosing himself to introduce himself as an entrepreneur and by sharing his success story of entrepreneurship in India. He is daring enough to chase his dream to break the ultimate shackles of economic slavery of deprived classes, though he has to violate the moral restrictions and commit a rebellion against the social order.

Balram Halwai; the protagonist and the narrator of the novel is a key to comprehending the novel as the course of events and the narrative of the novel advances; the narrator of the novel becomes a representative of society; vast in a global dimension, taking *The White Tiger* as a symbolic pseudonym when he addresses to China with a complete comprehension of USA and affairs of the world economy. He does not have the luxury of formal education, yet he is in a position to know different languages and basic information about different religions. The narrator of the novel commits moral crimes even murder as well, to raise his standard of life, which he eventually gets at a mighty cost. His upward mobility shows the great differences between the haves and have not. Adiga seems to suggest for Indians not to rely upon their fated path by changing the social, economic, and political order; as they may be able to redefine their classes minimizing the sheer gulf between them in a legally and morally correct manner.

The paradoxes within the character of Balram Halwai offer a great scope to study as he seems to share irreconcilable ideologies and a set of dichotomies sharing a broad range; by expressing the notion of class solidarity and hegemonic ideas that exploit the deprived classes for their advantage; that ultimately shows the inherent and innate injustice in the paralyzed Indian society. Arvind Adiga combines the modernist enlightened narrative out of Eastern literary tradition to carve out a mighty hero from strict class-stricken Indian society. The enlightened narrative gives the protagonist a global scope and context by inter-mingling the paradox traditions of East and West against the common belief.

Objective of the Study

This paper aims at analyzing the text of *The White Tiger* to discover the complex relationship of morality with desire in a hostile economic environment how individuals and society move forward to survive and live.

Methodology

This paper would analyze *The White Tiger* from the perspective of the theory of desire as presented by Rene Girard. This paper will rely on a qualitative method of research.

René Girard's Theory of Desire

This paper would consider René Girard's exceptional theory of desire, as a guiding tool to explore into the novel; *The White Tiger*. Girard considers that desire is ignited by the imitation of the desires of other people. The dominant factor in the European novels is, as indicated by Girard, the manifestation of metaphysical desire. There is a difference between metaphysical desire and spontaneous desire and it emerges as a consequence of imitation of the protagonist's desire's model. As a rule, desire is object-related. However, it is conceivable as is the case, that there is quite a possibility of free desire and consequently its achievement. Girard views desires as something ambiguous presumably in a structure of a triangle with the inclusion of a mediator. The presence of the mediator ensures the absence of freedom and autonomy of desire. The mediator is on-axis in the case; he receives and hinders the desire on his will; as a consequence, it changes itself into a model of desire that can transform the desires into the form of secondary and rival desires. Hence, the imitation of desires through a mediator model instead of direct experience; the subject is struck in the mediator model deprives of his own self. This possibly brings the form of rivalry as the subject begins to find himself a competitor of the mediator. The possibility of desire through imitations created more symmetry in the desires of a mediator and the subject.

As for as the romantic comprehension of the desire is concerned, it mainly lays its stresses upon the original and individual level. The desire would have been grounded upon impulsive magnetism towards houses, cars, and money. Girard, however, maintains that desire is not individual, impulsive, or triggered by money, cars, and housing. He denies the possibility of original desire. Eugene Webb in *Philosophy of Consciousness* maintains that desire “is always reaching past its ostensible objects and finds little or no real satisfaction in them.” (184). In the perspective of mimetic theory, desire is not stagnant or static and as a result, it can only be fixed in stages. Girard states the stages of desire in terms of decline; it develops from the attraction of the rival, the final stage of this state appears as the total possession by the same rival. At this stage, it results at being conflicting as it is intensified by the increasing passion of imitation of the other. The further expansion of this fascination ends at rivalry and from there it drags the individual to conflict and hatred and at last to the madness, murder, or suicide (414). Desire, at its most intensive stage, categorizes itself in grave illness, conflict, and violence. In the light of these discussions, the desire must be accompanied and described in terms of negative phenomena.

Mimetic Desire

René Girard in his first book ‘Deceit, Desire and the Novel’ presents the theory of desire which he grounds on mimesis. By mimesis, he refers to fundamental imitative tendency. It is, primarily, intrinsic and unconscious dynamism that triggers the process of human thinking and behavior. It is the force of imitation that ignites the development of language and securing of knowledge and it is also requisite for the nurturing of sociality and cultural tastes. This idea had sprung out from Aristotle who refers in *Poetics*: “Man differs from other animals in his great aptitude for imitation” (4-10). Imitation is very vital for human learning so much that it can be claimed that there is nothing like that is not learned without imitation and if humans, somehow, cease imitation, all cultural forms would disappear.

Girard differentiates between desire and appetite and further he does not associate his thinking to Freud’s psychoanalysis, who relates desire to libido. Desir, contrary to needs, requires a formless and diverse structure. Needs are meant to be fulfilled but their fulfillment is a rather easy one. Desires are complex phenomena; they can be diverse depending cultural, economic, and social background of a person. Desir is not arbitrary rather it is mediated by other people’s desires. Psychoanalysis poses desire as linear structured by the idea of cathexis. Girard sees it as a triangular structure; there is the presence of a third factor that is the mediator of the other between the object of desire and desired self. Girard states in *The Deceit, Desire and The Novel*:” Don Quixote surrendered to Amadis the individual’s fundamental prerogative: he no longer chooses the object of his own desire – Amadis must choose for him. The disciple pursues objects which are determined for him or at least seem to be determined for him, by the model of all chivalry. We shall call this model the mediator of desire. Chivalric existence is the imitation of Amadis in the same sense that the Christian’s existence is the imitation of Christ” (1 -2). “Knight errant” in Cervantes indicates that the essence of chivalry strengthens Don’s desire. Quixote then becomes the imitator par excellence in the context.

Viewing the object of desire is strongly influenced by the existence of a mediator in the structure of desire (Imran et al. 2020). The worth of an object is determined by his desire. There is a third person who seems to suggest to the subject what to desire. This is how Girard (2004) overpowers the idea of subjectivity or the objectivity of desire. He presents a new concept of inter-individual desire which he considers to be beyond the constituent of subjective or objective. This develops a base of Girard’s critique of romantic desire that suggests the originality and arbitrariness of the subject. The modern view of self-sufficiency is contradicted by Girard: The romantic *vaniteux* always wants to convince himself that his desire is written into the nature of things, or, which amounts to the same thing, that it is the emanation of a serene subjectivity, the creation ex nihilo of a quasi-divine ego” (15).

Mimetic Rivalry

Girard entertains that the presence of two desires that lead to the same object are necessarily competitive. The imitation that leads to conflict is named 'mimetic rivalry'. Girard shows two possibilities for the mediation of the desire: external and internal. The external desire is when: "the distance is sufficient to eliminate any contact between the two spheres of possibilities of which the mediator and the subject occupy the respective centers" (18). The internal desire is when there is no distance between the subject and the model from the desiring subject and it is more likely that it would assume the role of a rival since both of them are set to attain the same object (19). He further explains in *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*, that the subject, in case of the external desire, declares the truth behind his desire as his role becomes like that of a worshiper of the model and he calls himself the disciple of his model (10). The values in which the model believes are exactly those that he believes in. The subject is not aware of the imitation of it is purposefully kept hidden in case of the internal mediation. Girard entertains that "the impulse toward the object is ultimately the impulse toward the mediator; in internal mediation, this impulse is checked by the mediator himself since he desires, or perhaps possess, the object" (10).

Mimetic desire leads to effacement of alterations between competitors according to Girard. This mimetic conflict becomes doubly adverse as the mediator turns to be a rival and causes obstacles whereas he had stimulated the subject to imitate. At the core of the process of mimetic rivalry, a double imperative is involved; the mediator commands 'imitate me' coupled with the caution 'do not imitate me'. This contradiction of the imperative becomes the heart of the conflict. Girard further explains it in *Violence and the Sacred*: "Man and his desires thus perpetually transmit contradictory signals to one another. Neither model nor disciple really understands why one constantly thwarts the other because neither perceives that his desire has become the reflection of the other's" (147).

In his book 'Deceit, Desire and the Novel' Girard refers to Dostoyevsky's novels where: "hatred is so intense it finally 'explodes', revealing its double nature or rather the double role of model and obstacle played by the mediator. This adoring hatred, this admiration that insults and even kills its object, is the paroxysms of the conflict caused by internal mediation" (42).

The social and cultural order can be harmed by the intensity of the violence (Imran et al. 2020a). This consumes individuals and communal selves. According to Girard (2004) and Akhtar et al. (2021) considered culture merely as a regulated system of distinctions in which the differences among individuals are used to establish their 'identity' and their mutual relationships.

The elimination of the variances takes societies to the basic form of nature which Hobbs refers to as "war of all against all" (*bellum omnium contra omnes*): "Order, peace, and fecundity depend on cultural distinctions; it is not these distinctions but the loss of them that gives birth to fierce rivalries and sets members of the same family or social group at one another's throats" (49). As the rivalry begins to intensify, complete violence stretches in all spheres of society. This takes us to the question of what response a society could have to normalize this inner disaster. Collective violence, according to Girard, possibly has two forms; firstly, the violence "all against all", secondly the violence "all against one" the former type of violence causes social disintegration whereas the latter normalizes the social order.

Scapegoat mechanism

The violent rivalry considers Girard, is infectious and it moves like a pandemic. This outbreak of pandemic travels from individuals to society and from there to the institutions. Normally, there needs to find a solution to the conflict as the communal response to the pandemic of violence. The community formerly completely crumbled turns out to be united. A ferocious solution becomes eminent in response to the climax of conflict. Girard relates that the societies direct this type of mimetic desire against the target "scapegoat". "All against all" kind of communal violence, which earlier was intimidating the social breakdown, is extemporaneously converted to the kind of violence "all against one" and the social order is restored.

Girard alludes to the ancient communities' rituals when they face this kind of violence imminent in their society, the sins of communities were transported to a victim. Girard names it victimage mechanism or a process of scapegoat. The death of the scapegoat is necessary for the restoration of the social order. This process follows Caiaphas' principle: "You do not realize that it is better for you that one man dies for the people than that the whole nation perish" (John 11:50).

A kind of oblivion requires in the scapegoat mechanism; the victim could not be acknowledged as blameless. Girard elaborates that: "in order to be genuine, in order to exist as a social reality, as a stabilized viewpoint on some act of collective violence, scapegoating must remain nonconscious. Persecutors do not realize that they chose their victim for inadequate reasons, or perhaps for no reason at all, more or less at random" (78).

Violence and the sacred

Girard considers the scapegoat mechanism to be means of assuring peace in the society for a certain period of time at least. The intensity of this kind of experience bestows upon it a metaphysical sense. The social order seems to be under the influence of "sacred hierophany". It assures people that death is another form of life. The role of the sacred, apparently, is to guard social stability and peace. It worked for centuries and remained unchanged and even it is present in secular culture.

Girard relates that religion, society, and politics all cover the historic realism of the scapegoat mechanism. The outcast perception of the victim does not show up in myth, which he says, is: "the retrospective transfiguration of sacrificial crises, the reinterpretation of these crises in the light of the cultural order that has arisen from them" (64).

The Biblical Demystification

Girard forms a unique method of studying Judeo-Christian scriptures while he tries to find the traces of the mimetic cycle in the religion. In his book, *I Saw Satan Fall Like Lightning* he relates, "What I propose illuminates the divergences as well as the convergences between biblical and the mythical, not merely the innocence of the victims versus their guilt, but the fact that, in mythology, no one ever questions this guilt. In the Gospels, the revealing account of scapegoating emanates not from the unanimous crowd but from a dissenting few" (2).

The Judeo-Christian traditions transforms the communities which were grounded in collective violence. The bible emphasizes diverse perception, according to Girard, and this perception relies on the victim rather than the executioners. This triggers the process of an away movement of the society from violence to evangelical mercy.

The stories referred to in Bible have opposed the ancient myth; they familiarize striking deviations. The comparison of the Biblical story of Abel and Cain with the mythical story of Remus and Romulus shows a dramatic rivalry between the two brothers causing fratricide at the end. But the killing of Remus by Romulus is justified in the Roman myth. Romulus wants to be the king and he backed away from an agreed-upon territorial boundary and overpowered. Cain, in the biblical story, is never justified in the fratricide; he was held responsible for the blood of his innocent brother (Gen 4,9-10). Girard further explains this idea from the Christian perspective of the Resurrection of Jesus.

Girard's view in a Nutshell

There seems to be no substance in desire in the light of this comprehension. However, desire triggers the great force to impact and shape an individual and society. It penetrates into the deep self, the more it becomes intensive, the more the object becomes blurred, symbolic, and sterile in the subject's mind. Thus the reality in itself as a reference becomes blurred. The association of desire for the sake of pleasure thus results in more pain; thus, desire drags the subject to pain and agony. Desire on its model of desire takes at last to nothingness.

The ultimate effect of the desire makes the subject barren in self and while it takes him/ her to nothingness, it bears a resemblance to more or less to death. This death is primarily spiritual death

rather than to be taken as physical death as the whole reality which occurs in the subject's mind is conflicting existence of the other. The model or the mediator is a great problem as far as the logic of desire is concerned. On the other hand, if the rivalry is triggered, the model never responds to the wishes of the other. In this slow journey of imitating the desirous model towards the death-ridden existence, the subject never realized that the real problem is the desire itself.

The great novelists have addressed the delusion of self-sufficiency and the process which shows the possession of self by the other. Arvind Adiga seems to produce this phenomenon in the Indian context. Balram and Ashok represent two different sections of society. The rich are already living in their illusions and, Balram, while climbing the social ladder, falls victim to the same illusion as possessed by the rich class. Arvind Adiga in that sense reconnoiters the metaphysical desire. He does not seem to discuss the ordinary sensual relations; the sensual pleasure is not much evident in his work.

It is the perception of the mediator that draws the line of difference between realist and romantic novelists (415). As far as the romantic perspective is concerned, it accepts the existence of the mediator in form of a rival and does not recognize its character in mediating desire as it relies on the autonomy of the character and as Girard maintains that the character is ruled by a desire for self-sufficiency. The romantic perspective of desire maintains that desire is spontaneous in its nature. The realist perspective, on the other hand, exposes the conclusive role of the mediator in the formation of the desires of the character.

Analysis of the Text

Arvind Adiga in *The White Tiger* plays with both romantic and realist perspectives of desire. The fascination, at first, fluctuates between the romantic delusion and detachment from reality. Balram has to challenge life itself to be able to rise on his feet and then ultimately, his goal becomes to be as wealthy as his master is. In that sense, he is obviously a romantic hero.

Corruption and Desire in India and *The White Tiger*

India has been facing grim issues confronting the challenges imposed by the 21st century and there is a hot debate on the cards to determine the course of priority. Corruption is a major issue, while the unleashing of globalization, social disparity, extremism in religious issues and an unstoppable battle between social classes hampers India to be a big movement. The debasement and its solid evidence found in Indian politics and culture is the important subject of *The White Tiger*. The novel depicts an extremely dark side of India consistently where debasement is normal and frequently important for professional success or social notoriety. Corruption shown in India of the 1990s is not unique as India has its own parallel in Asian countries in the field of corruption. In any case, what makes India one of a kind is that corruption, instead of diminishing or if nothing else ending up less noticeable, is going the other way.

Suresh Kohli, in his book, assures that economic security is the most significant sole issue of corruption as there is a persistent possibility of gaining or losing in the Indian economy. His conclusion can be applied to the Indian culture and society even yet. The poor have no choice other than to sacrifice their morality in seeking the other end; the rich on the other hand, have to maintain their defilement in order to maintain their present status (14). This idle can be broken once the Indians feel themselves secure somehow in their social and economic context; once they possess the social insurance, meal of two times daily a house, dressing, and means of earning. The fulfillment of the fundamental requirements for life will secure their morals as the individual does not react in an improper way when his feet are on the secure ground. An essential factor while considering the answer for monetary uncertainty is seriously low government compensation. Government servants are not able to secure proper wages; which in return cause them to indulge in corruption to keep both ends meet. A policeman would surely accept the bribes if he finds someone guilty of breaking of law; as the share of his bribes exceed his income a great deal. If their salaries are increased to such a level where they could easily support their families; most probably they would not carry on the fishy practices (14). And the students of history suggest fair participation of upper and lower classes and they do not recommend extreme steps.

He argues that the government has to assure fair possibilities for everyone in service and business with sensible wages. On the off chance that these means are taken, alongside the requirement

of hostile to corruption laws, debasement will appear to be considerably less alluring to at any rate the center and lower classes. At the point when the high society's corruption is at last never again acknowledged or endured by whatever is left of society, the way toward expelling corruption from Indian culture will at long last start. Another part of financial aspects is globalization, a marvel that has affected India more than some other nation on the planet. Regardless of whether globalization is really useful for India, it has without a doubt added to its financial accomplishment as of late. The prime characters of the novel seem to present this view in the context. Globalization here gives all the positive power and assurance of prosperity at least in its appearance according to Balram's point of view, because of the outsourcing of occupations from American organizations, for example, IBM and Microsoft. For whatever length of time that organizations keep on outsourcing to India and give employment to the white-collar class, the local economy may be able to prosper (14).

Olivier de Sardan relates that the rise of corruption is a result of the desire to control the reign of society (25). Lawrence Rosen states that these desires ignite corruption and they are in themselves private and selfish. Sociocultural ideas and notions of privilege, power, and responsibility are responsible for their formation. Explanation of these desires has been present in different narratives in the postcolonial world (Siddique et al. 2020; Imran and Wei 2019). Robert Tignor in *Political Corruption in Nigeria before Independence* states that the colonial oppression gave rise to the corruption when it had to face the local resistance (31) and Bayarat in *The State in Africa: The Politics of Belly* is of the view that the forms of corruption do have the cultural dynamics as well. The complexity of sociocultural desire that is responsible for igniting corruption merges into the state as the state not only individualizes discipline but also it forms the circle of sociality and accretion of materials. Thus the pleasure that is derived from corruption is more or less the pleasure of the state as it has great power to gratify the desire for cultural, material, and social plenitude and it also has the power to legitimize it.

The prevalent corruption in India has great power to ignite individuals to pursue their desires in one way or the other. As the gate of corruption is wide open for them offering them an opportunity to satisfy their desires, the individuals, who are oppressed by the privileged class, the caste system of India, and injustice at a great scale, could not help themselves but indulge in those practices. The luxuries to please the rich class have no match the miseries endured by the poor. The outward gaiety of the rich lures the individuals of the poor class to match or surpass them. The common injustice does not give them to earn in the right way. At the first stage, they act to the call of necessities but once, an individual crosses the borderline of the extreme poverty and begins to enjoy the 'privileges' of necessities, the journey of desires starts and the rich model with its extreme power and wealth becomes the model of imitation. Thus, desire takes the better of individuals and they become the victim of desire and ultimately the corruption. Whereas the rich model already is corrupted with the abuse of power to strengthen themselves in wealth and power. The corrupted model is again a great source of luring individuals into the realm of corruption.

Ashok representing the rich class is the phenomenon of corruption that is sprung out of the desire to control the society on all levels. This control exceeds beyond the realm of cruelty as the local class system and extreme poverty in India make the status of the poor class more compromised. Balram representing the poor class, at first, faces the challenge of life itself and afterward, he becomes the victim of the same desire. His climbing of the social ladder is not easy as he has to face a monster of social class that has to be eliminated in order to get his desires satisfied. As corruption in society has become a norm in Indian society, there seems to be no conscience working for the rich class, and imitating that model it becomes easier for Balram to kill him to be able to take his place.

The perception of Desire in Class Stratification

There are many other divisions prevalent in the society in addition to the division of proletariat and bourgeoisie. The class is a dominant part of man's life; it proclaims itself in his actions so much that his language, his dress, his rearing, his background, his way of leading life, and his eating and dozing habits speak up to what class he belongs to. This is seen in the novel as individuals in India are

stratified based on the topographical spots of the nation in which they dwell, the alcohol that they drink, the schools where they represent, their appearance, their positions.

Light India, Dark India, and Levels of Desire

The novel presents further subdivisions of the idea of greed and desire; Balram, the hero, proclaims that India has been divided into India of Light and India of Darkness. Light India is the identity of the rich Indians who possess and control the means of life; their lifestyle matches that of the Europeans; the hot and dusty climate of India is no source of discomfort for them. India of Darkness, on the other hand, is the India of the poor masses; it has a great potential of its own with green fields full of grains, fruit, and so many things; their potentialities are the source of enhancement of the India of Light; they are left deprived on the expense of the rich class of the India of Light; they have left what remains behind after the stealing. The India of Light has a dire control on the India of the Darkness as it is a basic resource of their fulfillment and enhancement; the living standard of Light India depends upon the efforts of Dark India. Arvind Adiga in this novel shows sympathy for Dark India; it portrays as a destructive, melancholic, and brutal practical sketch of Dark India. The awfully rich class exploits to its fill the poor masses of Dark India; the rich of Light India is the worthy human beings whereas the poor individuals of Dark India are mere mutts:

"India is two countries into one, India of Light and an India of Darkness. Ocean brings light to my county. Every place on the map of India near the ocean is well off but the river brings darkness to India" (14).

The individuals of Dark India live under unnerving and heinous conditions. The managers forced upon them are very strict and scanty. The schools are non-existent, if there exists some, they are a bad dream; the schools are the home for the cattle and reptiles; there is no wall around them; the rooms are not available and the furniture is broken; Dark India has no system of water supply so the cattle and human alike utilize the same resources of water. Adiga laments the poor arrangement on the behalf of the government for the poor masses; instead of clean water, they are provided with the availability of mobile phones at cheap call rates. The children of Dark India are a picture of hunger; they resemble phantoms since they are not provided with a nutritious diet. The India of Light has the power to decide and that is the ultimate distinction between the two. The India of Light has choices of its own as it decides for itself; the India of the Dark has no choice to exercise as their choices are decided by the India of the Light. The poor masses are left alone with their hunger and poverty and there is no method left for them to come out of the chaos and to liberate themselves from the clutches of their cruel masters.

Balram's character seems powerful to some extent as he is able to recognize his opportunity to prevail and he has the power to shun his past and move beyond the limits which had been set for his clan as they may never be able to stand on their own. An individual from Dark India goes to the cities in order to find means for a better life; they are scattered everywhere in the big cities with a ray of hope in their eyes though they are never able to find that end to achieve. They are the slaves of their own making as they are brought up under such circumstances that they lose everything that matters to stand tall. Their resistance falls short at every time for the better prospect in life as they are made to live in the Dark; Light puzzles and outdoes them.

There are common people whose sole purpose is to serve to satisfy the big bellies that are never to be satisfied though, no matter how much effort is put up. The people are divided into class on the basis of hunger; the rich is the one who has unlimited hunger; the poor are poor on the account that they hand little hunger to satisfy. The rich have not only a desire to eat but to involve themselves in every process. There are the ones who have the luxury to eat and there are the ones who have left nothing but to be eaten up. Balram is also the one who was the victim of being eaten when he was in the village; his father seems no more a human being by any of the actions he does; he was more a creature than to be a human being; he was feeble and weak; he was hopeless; he has no part of the body without the scars of the pain; that pain makes him immune though. Even then he feels that his children should lead a respectable life; his ultimate remorse was that he was treated all his life like an ass; he has the greatest desire that at least one of his sons can be able to live like a man (30).

The deep gulf between the two sections of the society offers a great dilemma for Indian society. The poor class commonly lives no better than animals and the poor people have to strive hard to end every day of their life in order to have something to eat. The great persuasion in this type of life is no other than to have satisfied the essentials basic to life. But the heart that suffers this humiliation to get every handful is pregnant of the hatred to the life itself. When the ones cross that line of extreme poverty forcedly drawn upon them, the desire has new buds to spring out. Now if one pursues his desire, there seems to be a limit that becomes a hindrance in its way of completion.

Light India is a perfect model of desire whereas Dark India more often dreams to be a part of Light India. Many in Dark India are left in the dark as they are content to live a precarious dark life; life for them is a burden transporting of which is their ultimate fate as they are no more than beast of burden.

Immorality and the Desire

Balram in his memory of the Lord Buddha finds himself illuminated at the end of the story, enabling him to reason that he has turned out to be edified and illuminated, that he has seen something others couldn't see, and that his vision legitimizes his deeds—some way or another; he relates a story which he seems not sure where he had read it; this story is of Buddha's story in which a cunning Brahmin in an attempt to trick Buddha asked a question whether he was a man or god. The Buddha in return smiled and replied that he is simply awake whereas the others are sleeping and that is the difference only. Balram then addresses Mr. Jiabao that he had the same answer to the question in which he was asked whether he was a man or a demon. He did not claim that he is awake whereas the rest of the others are sleeping (315).

Lord Buddha had freed himself from the clutches of desire and he had found the final answers to the problems of man by attaining 'nirvan'. His reply that he is simply awake while others are asleep shows that others wildly and violently chase the vicious circle of desires which have no end in the sight. Ashok is following a pattern of desires of his own whereas Balram considers Ashok as a model of desire and at every step he keenly observes him and his ways.

People gathered from the two opposite social classes are plain inverse to each other. A poor man has all the traces of his life history imprinted upon his body; the marks of the whip; the scars and burns over his body; his bends on his necks every one of them is a proclamation to his agony and pain if someone is there to hear them if someone lends an ear to them. The rich, on the other hand, possesses a delicate and charming body; their white color shines under the artificially cooled environment; they are aware of their power of purchase with the help of their wealth and riches; the outward environment and climate do nothing to them as they are immune to the climate.

"The story of a poor man is written on his body in sharp pen" (27).

Whereas *"A rich man's body is like a premium cotton pillow: white, soft and blank" (26).*

Balram has made up his mind to lead a different life as he could not find himself content in the cruel atmosphere where he has seen deprivation alive and his masters are living in a paradise of their own. At this stage his master; Mr. Ashok serves as his model of desire; all he had to do is to keenly observe his ways of living. Balram is able to comprehend somehow all this fabric of cruel and ruthless matter; he observes his environment keenly and eagerly. He was poorly educated though, his sharp instinct guides him through; he goes to the coffee stalls and taxi stands and bus stands; he observes there the common people and gets benefited by their gossip and experience; he never misses even a single occasion of learning. This all enabled him to assume the role of *The White Tiger*; he assumes it to the heart and does not leave a touch away from the perfection; he perfectly imitates the rich model; the model of success for him. His master; Mr. Ashok is a main model to imitate; he keeps an eye over him every movement; his shopping, his decision making, and every next moment he acts like his master and purchases even the same colors and hues:

"Blue, chequered polyester shirt, orange polyester trousers...those are the kind of clothes sir which would appeal to a servant's eye" (22).

Balram vows that he would never wear like an ordinary man; he determines to wear like his master and this would enable him to impersonate him; this is the sign that he is going to be different from his earlier fate in life in coming years.

Balam tells his tale and the indication of ruthless extermination of his whole family is there as well; only his nephew survives in the brutal act; Balam himself lays the foundation of the murder of his family and this is the crime he is boastful of and he celebrates it in a jubilant manner:

“Calling myself Bangalore’s least known success story isn’t entirely true, I confess. About three years ago, when I became, briefly, a person of national importance owing to an act of entrepreneurship, a poster with my face on it found its way to every post office, railway station, and police station in this country” (11).

Balam's brilliant tale is somehow covered in the haze of mystery; it is in the epistolary form where he speaks to the Chinese Premier in the setting of Bangalore. It is a more complex and mysterious story than it seems to be in its appearance. Balam was driving for the skinny son of his landlord before he moved to Bangalore. He smashed the head of his master; Mr. Ashok on a stormy day and there he was able to steal a bag full of money that became the basic investment of his taxi fleet business in Bangalore.

Balam observes, here, the causes of a wide, regularly developing chasm amongst rich and poor people. Ashok fixes the government officials by giving them the well-deserved cash of his town individuals. His wife ridicules Balam as he is not able to pronounce the word ‘Pizza’ accurately. Balam is asked to confess the murder which he himself has not done; it was Ashok’s wife; pinky, who rolled down a kid under his vehicle and killed him accidentally; as she belongs to the rich class, she must be saved and Balam has to replace her. Balam is embarrassed in this context, and his protest inside him begins to rise slowly but steadily. He comprehends Pinky. He observes the contradiction of the so-called system with its remote connection to reality which bases upon deceit and treachery; the claims of equity and justice are merely superficial. The police even determine first to what class people belong to decide what treatment they are capable of:

“A man on a bicycle getting killed – the police even do not have to register a case. A man on motorbike getting killed – they would have to register that. A man in a car getting killed – they would have thrown me in the jail” (309).

Adiga demonstrates, here, the distinction between the poor and the rich masses that destitute individuals are continually being misused and they consume in their internal misery; social stratification becomes the basic cause of this wide gap. The rich perpetrate wrongdoings, and they have not to be answerable for their crimes; the poor are responsible for what they have not done even, if perchance they do, there is no refuge for them; the whole systems stand against them with all its might. Such things in the general public make a feeling of distress in the psyches of individuals having a place with lower strata of the common masses.

Balam turns out to be especially incensed at that point; he lets no occasion to harm Ashok in each conceivable way; he steals petrol from the vehicle he drives; he has to replicate Ashok’s personality so he needs more money out of him; his dreams have to be fulfilled on Ashok’s expense just the way the rich depend upon the poor for their luxuries. Balam is embarrassed at every moment when Ashok raises the level of his riches. Ashok has illegitimate ties with a society girl who has a great resemblance with resembles Kim Basinger; in imitation of that part, Balam consumes a great part of his compensation to form an association with a society girl to have the same sentimental experience. The dyed hair of the society girl reminds Balam of the true colors of life; the life around him to goes on with artificial colors and unreal manners.

“That is when it hit me, in the way it never had before – how the rich always get the best things in life, and all that we get is their leftovers” (233).

Ashok is left alone when Pinky deserts him; she returns to America; Ashok is left broken and bruised; the irony of the situation is that some servant of his has to act like his spouse as well for his heal and contentment. Balam plays a greater part to heal Ashok, he accompanies him everywhere, in restaurants, parks; he cooks various types of food for him. He further observes:

“food is enough to feed a rich man or a whole family” (238).

Towards the end of the novel, Baram himself becomes the part of the same system which was used to be the center of his hatred; he reaches that stage where he can decide which way is better; he perhaps has not lost his all the hope of morality; he abstains from doing such things which he did not like for him when he belonged to the labor class. He doesn't rehash the wheel; he aims of going higher but not at the expense of the working class.

"It's amazing. The moment you show cash, everyone knows your language" (300).

His adventure from clothes to newfound wealth has not been extremely spic and traverse but rather presumably he had no other alternative to breaking out of the coop, to get free from the shackles of neediness and class.

"Balram presents the entire journey of his life .Balram exhibits a sardonic picture of India. He presents two sides of India as he divides 'India of Darkness' and 'India of Lightness" (14).

Agarwal states that Balram's voyage from poverty to riches is a parallel of the ethics of the modern world; his adventure from the countryside to the cosmopolitan urges him to compromise his morals as it is the price and ticket for the entry to the modern capitalistic world of reality; he has left on another alternative to breaking the shackles of slavery (154).

Balram; the hero of the novel, is a representation of the modern shameless world of material desires; the hero has his own justification for the cruel things he himself has done in the context of the novel. But perhaps there is no justification for the absence of morality; though he gives legitimation to all his acts, Adiga thus states *"All I wanted was a chance 'to be a man – and for that, one murder was enough" (318).*

Balram has to part ways with the ways of morality; he, in fact, has been deprived of the moral conduct in the social context he was born with.

"Balram's character evokes the perplexity of human nature and moral destruction. Further, about Dharma, he comments: "The new generation, I tell you, is growing up with no morals at all" (316).

The inhabitants of modern India, like the example of the modern world, have been deprived of the moral code and conduct; the material growth and prosperity are important to them all; in return what they have to lose is the virtue of morality but nobody cares. The outwardly comforts and luxuries, the display of immense wealth is a pleasing scene to them; but this is a trap only; it all has a price to acquire it; the moral quest is left unfinished which is the most necessary part of life. Social stratification with gross inequalities is a great cause of this dilemma (Imran and Gull 2017). This is a strange modern world where some of the people can grow mighty billionaires who then control resources to maintain their status at the cost of the fellow human being; that is the cruelest thing. Balram's character confirms those contradictions.

Balram only requires a secure future for his kids, a fair means of livelihood; the type of life that he could not have like the masses who are cruelly oppressed; he offers his apology:

"All my life, I have been treated like a donkey. All I wanted that at least one son of mine - at least one - live like a man" (30). "The story of a poor man is written on his body in sharp pen" (27).

And on the other hand:

"It's amazing. The moment you show cash, everyone knows your language" (300).

At the end of the novel, Balram finds his model of desire as his opponent. For him to raise it was necessary to eliminate his model of desire. He as a consequence kills Mr. Ashok who seems to do the model of desire. The complex evolution of desire turns Balram into a self that he himself was not aware of. The wide chasm between the rich and the poor; the social stratification clearly bent toward leaving no way out for the oppressed class; consequently, they have to develop their own model of standards to reach their objective to join the high ranks as the rich have everything that can be imitated and wished.

Conclusion

As the society has no morality model to follow, the imminent immoral and corrupt rich model shows the way to fulfill the unsatisfied desires of the individuals. The poor class has no burden of morality to bear when it has to fight for its survival. The starvation becomes its great fear; the mind that is alive to assess the ethics of acts becomes dull and the struggle to survive becomes the first option. The injustice of the society mars every sign of morality and the case of morality and ethics loses its essence in the eyes of individuals (Imran and Wei 2019). The ones who have the luxury of basic necessities of life fall to immorality following the madness of their desires. The matter becomes the ultimate reality of life and to acquire it, one can bear any price. The desire in this way drags the individuals to follow a path that has its own values and those values have nothing to do with ethics and morality.

Balram's life is testimony to the fact that he has to follow Ashok as his model of imitation, there is left no space for him to act according to his conscious rather he would do what his master does. Rene Girard observes "*Mimetic desire thinks that it always chooses the most life-affirming path, whereas in actuality it turns increasingly towards the obstacle—toward sterility and death.*" (415) As his master is no great example, so Balram's desires lead him into the direction to become rich like his master and on that way his master becomes his rival whom he kills at last.

On the other hand, society seems to have no choice of scapegoat to normalize the violence prevalent in the community. The social order seems to be collapsed as justice in every aspect of life is missing. The killing of Ashok marks the end limit of the society as he represents the upper class, the exercise of the violence upon him looks to be the execution of the whole elite group at least if not of the whole of the society. The elite capture has not left any choice of scapegoat so the consequences of their extreme desires would cost the very fabric of the society. The civilization is moving slowly to violence all against all rather than all against one.

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