

ARAVIND ADIGA'S *THE WHITE TIGER*: THE VOICE OF THE SUBALTERNS

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Abstract

In his first novel, *The White Tiger* (2008), Aravind Adiga—a notable representative of Indian writing in English—has successfully brought attention to the problem of the marginalized and the underprivileged, the development of India. Adiga is attempting to draw attention to the fact that the subalterns can talk at times, by depicting the protagonist in an original way, as he undergoes a transformation from a village simpleton to a certified businessman through the use of Machiavellian strategies. Adiga aims to emphasize the rising subaltern consciousness for the benefit of subaltern people, by also depicting the protagonist, Balram Halwai, going through a great deal of difficulty and tribulation before finally succeeding in becoming a business tycoon in an Indian city through dishonest means. This research assesses how the subaltern class is depicted in Adiga's Indian society in order to understand the identity of the subaltern class in *The White Tiger* from the standpoint of postcolonial dialectics.

Keywords: Subaltern Consciousness, Marginalized, Underprivileged, Identity, Postcolonial Dialectics

Introduction

The title of the text under consideration, *The White Tiger* (2008) alludes metaphorically to the transformation of the colonial oppressed/dominated into the oppressor/dominator in a wider picture. It tells the tale of Balram Halwai, who is oppressed or dominated and the significant events that shape the framework of the novel, beginning in the little town of Laxmangarh in the remote Indian state of Jharkhand and moving on to Delhi and Bangalore. The hegemonic power imposed by the oppressors who shape and control the life of the dominated, powerless people, is portrayed in the novel. The depiction of the subalterns and their opposition to regain their identity and status is shown in Adiga's work, in their efforts to move from the periphery to the centre. The novel is written in the epistolary form and for this Adiga explains the reason like this:

Since the story contains actual murder, he is unable to share with it anyone; as a result, he now only shares it alone. The impending presence of a significant foreigner prompts him to consider his nation and society, as it does with all Indians who are preoccupied (a colonial legacy, perhaps) with the outsider's gaze. He therefore converses about himself and his nation in the seclusion of his room. (*The Sunday Times*, April 6, 2008)

Adiga places the downtrodden, the marginalized and the lower class of society, as the corollary of his meta-narrative in *The White Tiger*. It is the tale of the other, of the marginalized, victimized group which is denied equality and, as a result, is labelled as being underprivileged. Due to their social standing, they are somehow inferior to another group. This "underclass," as Adiga calls it, is portrayed to highlight the structure of the dichotomy between the dominant and the subordinate class in Indian society, where the lower class, tribes and aborigines, minorities, and workers, labourers, and small businessmen are all quashed in one way or another. Adiga depicts the pain, tyranny and humiliation of the underprivileged in the context of an advanced capitalist society in *The White Tiger*. Through the representation of a subordinate figure who stands for his class and others who are in "perpetual slavery," an attempt has been made to "listen to the quiet voice of history" in this study.