

## CHAPTER-I

### Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* and the Ethics of Being

Literature and society are interwoven both internally and externally; they are the two sides of the same coin. W.H. Hudson rightly holds the view:

Literature is the vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have experienced of it, what they thought and felt about those aspects of it which have the most immediate and enduring interest for all of us. It is, thus, fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language.... (Henry, 10)

From its very beginning, the Indian English fiction has witnessed socio-cultural, economic and political changes in the destiny of our nation. The story of the Indian English novel is really the story of a changing India. There was a time when education was a rare opportunity and speaking English was unnecessary. It was the time when the destiny of India was eclipsed by the British rule. The British, who came in India for their self-motive i.e. trade, brought with them a large civil service, an educational system, railways, network of transport and communication all of which were taken with enthusiasm by the people of the subcontinent. They also brought a language that was needed to communicate and the literature which that language created proved the most productive legacy. Though foreign in its origin, English has been adopted in India as a language of education and literary expression, besides being an important medium of communication amongst the people of various regions. The beginning of Indian literature in English is traced to the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th, by which time English education was more or less firmly established in the three major centres of British power in India— Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. Ram Mohan Roy (1774-1833), a social reformist from Bengal who fought for widow remarriage and voting rights for women, was the pioneer of Indian writing in English. He insisted upon the wider acceptance and use of English language for India's inclusion among the world's nations. He, therefore, emphasized the introduction of scientific education in India through the English medium. He was followed in the early 19th century in Bengal by the poets Henry Derozio and Michael Madhusudan Dutt. So the British took English to India and the Indians gave back a literary tradition which continues to delight and enrich us till this day. In recent years English language has attracted widespread interest, both in India and abroad. It is now recognized that Indian English literature is not only part of Commonwealth

Literature, but also occupies a great significance in the world literature. English fiction and poetry both has been centre of Indian writing in English since ages.

The Indian English novel erupted in the fiery talks of Henry Derozio, the spiritual prose of Tagore and the pacifist dictums preached by Gandhi. Historically, Indian English fiction owes its origin to Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864). It began as a small plant which has now attained a luxuriant growth and branched off in various directions. The development of Indian novel follows certain definite patterns, and it is not difficult to trace its gradual progression from the imitative stage to the realistic, to psychological and ultimately to the experimental stage. Its foundation was laid by the trio who were called "the Big Three" of Indo-Anglian novel, by William Walsh who said:

It is these three writers who defined the area in which the Indian novel was to operate. They established its assumptions; they sketched its main themes, freed the first models of its characters and elaborated its particular logic. Each of them used an easy, natural idiom which was unaffected by the opacity of a British inheritance. Their language has been freed of the foggy taste of Britain and transferred to a wholly new setting of brutal heat and brilliant light.<sup>1</sup>

It was in this phase that we came across excellent novels for the first time. Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* (1935), R.K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends* (1935) and Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938), besides other popular novels by them still holds the interest of the reader for their universal appeal and Indianness. An Indo-Anglian fiction, particularly the fiction of the thirties, is immensely influenced by the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi who fought for the cause of the underprivileged classes, the have-nots and the downtrodden, the marginalized and the defenceless. Apart from many other things, these writers mirrored the various contemporary, social, cultural, political, economic and religious upheavals in general. Critics like William Walsh, Alstair Niven, K.R.S. Iyengar, C.D. Narasimhaiah and M.K. Naik have evaluated and appreciated the works of Anand, Narayan and Raja Rao. According to William Walsh, if Anand is the social reformer, Raja Rao is the novelist cum metaphysical poet, while Narayan is simply the novelist as a novelist. By and large, the Indian English novelists have attempted to face the reality around them with greater courage and responsibility. In the words of K .R. Srinivas Iyengar:

He is one of the few writers in India who take their craft seriously, constantly striving to improve the instrument, pursuing with a sense of dedication what may

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.mdudde.net/pdf/study\\_material\\_DDE/ma/ma-English/INDIAN%20IN%20ENGLISH-Section%20%20&%20D-Complete.pdf](http://www.mdudde.net/pdf/study_material_DDE/ma/ma-English/INDIAN%20IN%20ENGLISH-Section%20%20&%20D-Complete.pdf) June 24, 2011.

often seem to be the mirage of technical perfection. There is a norm of excellence below which Narayan cannot possibly lower himself. (Iyenger, 359)

Novels published in the period from 1935 to 1960 delineate the experience of the colonial age and dilemmas of post-independent reality. In the forties, G.V. Desani's *All About H. Hatterr* (1948) made a major breakthrough in formal experimentation and became a masterpiece of remarkable artistry. It was his first genius effort to go beyond the Englishness of the English language. Among the writers of the thirties and forties, most of the novelists are settled in the West. As a matter of fact, they are struggling to give pattern to their new destiny. In their novels, these novelists depict the post-colonial world plagued by neo-colonial catastrophe like economic disorder, social malaise, governmental corruption and state repression. Some of the sensitive writers responded to these by migrating to less repressive and more comfortable lands. After the 1950s, however, Indian novelists' interest moved from the public to private sphere. They began to delineate in their works, the individual's quest for the self in all varied and complex forms. Novelists like Anita Desai, Arun Joshi and Nayantara Sahgal changed through their works the face of Indian English novel and their works contain seeds of future development. Most of Desai's novels reveal the breakdown of relationship. She deals with the psychological aspects of her characters. Anita Desai explored the inner climate, the climate of sensibility in her novels and added a new dimension to the achievement of Indian women writers in English fiction. A striking feature of Arun Joshi's fiction is his experimentation with different narrative techniques. Nayantara Sahgal, with her work *Rich Like Us* (1985), has shown a very charming way of storytelling, and Kamala Das with her autobiographical and bold works, treaded the paths hitherto unknown for Indo-Anglian novelists.

Literature is the mirror of the society and every age is different in itself. Taking a departure from the first generation of Indian English novelists, the present generation of Indian English novelists— Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Shashi Tharoor, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Vikram Chandra, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Nagarkar etc. are the makers of new patterns and traditions by concentrating on an entirely new-fangled set of themes which are as wide-ranging and complex as the life in the age of globalisation is. Engrossed with the emerging issues like globalisation and subsequent multiculturalism, postfeminism, cyber-feminism, queer theories, cultural conflicts, diaspora sensibility, glamour, consumerism, commodification, BPOs, upward mobility and consequent erosion of ethical values, and transforming public sphere, the present generation of novelists seems

to have buried down the erstwhile fundamental issues. Today, one can easily notice a remarkable change in contemporary discourses on Indian English novel.

Salman Rushdie, with the publication of *Midnight's Children* (1981) jolted the very foundation of the Indian English novel. It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that unexpected and overwhelming changes in Western attitudes towards India and Indian Literature came when Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* was published in 1981. In the novel, Rushdie conjures up a generation of Indians born at midnight of August 15, 1947. He writes:

What made the event noteworthy... was the nature of these children, every one of the whom was, through some freak of biology or perhaps owing to some preternatural power of the moment, or just conceivably by sheer coincidence... endowed with features, talents or faculties which can only be described as miraculous. It was as though ... history, arriving at a point of the highest significance and promise, had chosen to sow, in that instant, the seeds of a future which would genuinely differ from anything the world has seen up to that time. (Rushdie, West 195)

Among the contemporary writers, Amitav Ghosh has shown his genius in the Indian English fiction. He belongs to the literary tradition that was fostered and nourished by Rushdie, Shashi Tharoor and others. Like many of his contemporaries, he has been immensely influenced by the political and cultural milieu of post-independent India. *The Shadow Lines* (1988), seems to mock even the concept of exclusive national identity. Even ideals nurtured by the freedom struggle suddenly seem meaningless. Vikram Seth attained a dizzy height of success with *The Golden Gate* (1986) and *A Suitable Boy* (1993). He stunned the literary world with his novel with a forbidding size *A Suitable Boy*. With his novel *English August* (1988), Upamanyu Chatterjee got great success. His tone is ironic and he hit all the foibles of the Indian bureaucracy. Chatterjee brilliantly uses Indianised English in the novel. His contemporary Shashi Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel* (1989) is one of the greatest achievements of Indian English fiction. It is a retelling of the political history of the 20th century India through a fictional recasting of events, episodes and characters from the *Mahabharat*. In the 1990s, Rohinton Mistry has emerged as a significant novelist. His *Such a long Journey* (1991) is his maiden attempt in the genre in which he deals with the predicament of modern life.

Arundhati Roy is one such talented writer of the post—*Midnight's Children* era who shows real psychological depth while conveying the realities of culture and history. Her novel *The God of Small Things* has earned much critical attention all over the world and fetched her Booker Prize.

Undoubtedly, Roy has managed to free herself from the shackles of conventional writing. She successfully experimented with the language, and has been duly rewarded for that. As with Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai's work also manages to explore the post-colonial chaos and despair. Her first novel *Hullabaloo* in the *Guava Orchard* satirizes society at large. Her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) spans continents, generations, cultures, religions, and races. She handles all these with ease like a master craftsman. Her narrative style, creative use of language and handling of plot put her among the leading Indian English fiction writers and this is acknowledged by the Booker Prize she got for the novel.

As the number of readers of Indian English fiction has increased, the quality of writing has also improved. The writers are now no longer active users of English but they have English as their first language. They express themselves with native proficiency. They also think and write in one language, which is English. Now one can see a good number of Indian English fiction writers who have stunned the literary world with their works. Their works have enriched the world literature, and they have been awarded with accolades and prizes in the field of literature, but a careful study of their development makes it clear that there are two kinds of writers who contributed to the genre of novel. The first group of writers focused on the various social problems of India like poverty, class discrimination, social dogmas, rigid religious norms etc. which generally imparts sadistic pleasure to the West. The second group of writers includes those who are global Indians, who are Indians by birth but they live abroad, so they see Indian realities objectively. They are at ease with the English language and have enriched English language with their creativity. Even while handling Indian sensibility, these writers are no longer the slavish imitators of English. They have experimented with the language and fused Indian spirit in the foreign language. They have coined new words and idiomatic expressions in English and added a new flavour to English language. It is often argued that if one wants to be noticed in the west, one should present the East in unfavourable light. Often the Indian writers who present India and its culture in the unfavourable light are considered for the awards. The west has a typical notion about the third world, where they only see poverty, wretchedness, terrorism, lack of system, failure of democracy and so forth.

However, in the last few years, the scenario has changed. The Indian writers are major contributors to the English fiction and they are no longer 'sympathy seekers'. They have their English and their genuine experience to share. Apart from this, another reason for their recognition is their innovative experiments in the genre. It can be a narrative innovation or linguistic

experimentation. Often we find autobiographical elements in their works. Such writers are often awarded for their linguistic experimentation and genuine tale. If we go back to the list of Indian Booker Prize Winners, we see that the writers of the Indian origin like Salman Rushdie, V.S. Naipaul, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai and Aravind Adiga have one thing common in their writings – they are not traditional Indian English writers. They can use English as naturally as they breathe. And what is more important is that these writers have lived abroad for major part of their life, so they have imbibed and assimilated the Western trends and it lends them the distance to have an objective view on India and Indians. These writers have come across many Englishes of the world and showed the world their English. There is affluence for some and poverty for many. There are some winners and many losers. It would seem that there are two worlds that co-exist in space even if they are far apart in well-being. If this is what we call transformation then there is nothing wrong in the new generation of writers like Chetan Bhagat (IITian turned banker turned writer), Aravind Adiga, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Kiran Desai, Salman Rushdie, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Bharati Mukherjee, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Rohinton Mistry, Anita Desai, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Suketu Mehta and many others who are rightly in tune with the socio-economic and cultural milieu today. It is only because of their sensitivity towards the changing national realities with the fine mix of fiction that they are presenting to us the rural-urban divide, consumerism, commodification, glittering metropolitan culture, upward mobility, spell of westernization, openness in relations, and changing principles guiding our ethics and morals. In this context, Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* which bagged him Man Booker Prize (2008) is a passionate account of propensity among Indians to rise and rise higher, though at the cost of age old ethical values and beliefs—social, religious, cultural, economic and political.

In his novel *Between the Assassination*, Adiga portrays character sketches of ordinary Indians in a small town of Kittur in South India. Through a series of stories, the author presents the changes that took place in Kittur, a microcosm of India. The stories are nearly arranged into seven days of narration representing the seven years of life in Kittur between the assassinations of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her son Rajiv Gandhi. This comes in contrast to *The White Tiger*. It is an amalgam of the characteristics of the different characters in *Between Assassinations* written in 2005. These stories serve as a perfect foil to *The White Tiger* which is a novel focusing on the poverty and misery of India and its religio-socio-political conflicts. Adiga who left Mangalore in 1991 when his father moved to Australia, found it as a changed city on his return after fifteen

years. The population of the city doubled and shopping malls and high-rise apartment buildings had reshaped the skyline. There were five new medical colleges, four dental colleges, fourteen physiotherapy colleges and three hundred fifty schools, colleges and polytechnics. The new affluence seemed to have come at a price. Looking around the transformed city, he also observed a group of drifters and homeless men—the part of underclass who seemed to have been left out of the story of India's growth. Adiga was curious and troubled by the sight, and during his travels in India as a journalist, he wanted to explore more.

Adiga uses this novel to show the paradox of modern India. From the vantage point of a visitor to its great cities, it is a world of the present and the future bringing new opportunities to its population. The truth of India is far more complex. This surface covers over a parallel truth of vast suffering and hopelessness. The great Indian democracy—according to Adiga—is an illusion, which can fool outsiders from China or the West. People living within the dark interior of India understand that the rapid economic development of the country has no effect on their lives or even the lives of their children. The novel presents the ever widening gap between the rich and poor, rural and urban, and the brutal reality of an economic system that allows a small minority to prosper at the expense of the silent majority; political culture of India, voting behaviour, social milieu, caste and culture conflict, superstition, social taboos, exploitation of underclass, Zamindari practice, emergence of Naxalism, unemployment especially in rural India, prostitution, master-servant relationship, nexus among the politicians, criminals, corporate houses and the police, mockery of education system, hollowness of welfare schemes, poor medical services, harmful impact of scientific, technological and industrial development etc. The novel portrays as to how the land of Gandhi and 'ahimsa', has been made brutal by corruption and injustice. It is difficult to label that the narrative is comical or tragic. This novel is partly picaresque and partly epistolary in nature. A close examination of the form of the novel also reveals a lack of consistency in his use of the form of the novel. It begins in the epistolary form as the author writes a letter to the Chinese Premier, but after a few chapters, he gives up this form and lapses into free expression. In the same way, the author sometimes appears erratic as he imitates the style of the picaresque novel *Tom Jones*.

The novel makes the truth stand on its head, through a mode of expression that appears quite suitable to the central theme of the novel. Balram is certainly a rogue, at times almost likeable, and the tale is told in the form of a seven part letter from Balram halwai, a prospering

entrepreneur from India to his Excellency Wen Jiabao, a Chinese Premier who is to visit India soon on a political mission. He wants to learn how to make a few aspiring Chinese successful entrepreneurs. In these letters, the protagonist of the novel offers him, “Out of respect for the love of liberty shown by the Chinese people to tell...” (5), the truth about India, free of cost. He also believes that, “the future of the world lies with the yellow man and the brown man...” (5). He recounts his life story in such a way that he gives to the Chinese Premier a glimpse into the true face of India. These letters appear to be Adiga’s, “secret, uncensored articles” (Overdorf, 64). The visiting premier is introduced to the ‘new India’, a satire on the realities of India, a sharp contrast between life as it is lived by India’s poor people and its prosperous middle classes. Balram, the protagonist of the novel, has mastered the management of survival all by his own and advises the Chinese Premier not to buy the bootlegged copy of American Business book to learn management. He says, “Don’t waste your money on American books. They are so yesterday. I am tomorrow.” (6)

The novel draws the attention of thousands of Indian readers not only for winning the Man Booker Prize 2008 but primarily for its realistic and graphic picture of some of the canny truths about India. It begins in Balram’s native village which passes through Dhanbad and ends in Bangalore. The ordinary people in his narration are from Bihar who migrates to different cities for work, in order to get livelihood. In an interview, Arvind Adiga elaborates:

Balram Halwai is a composite of various men I’ve met when travelling through India. I spend a lot of my time loitering about train stations, or bus stands, or servants’ quarters and slums, and I listen and talk to the people around me. There is a kind of continuous murmur or growl beneath middle class life in India, and this noise never gets recorded, Balram is what you’d hear if one day the drain and faucets in your house started talking.<sup>2</sup>

Some critics and reviewers have accused Adiga for presenting a negative image of India. It is perhaps the most drastic and bitter fact that has impressed the judges, who have got a revealing

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.bookbrowse.com/author\\_interviews/full/index.cfm?author-number=1552](http://www.bookbrowse.com/author_interviews/full/index.cfm?author-number=1552) June24, 2011.

inside into India. Amitav Kumar remarks that the novel presents the, “cynical anthropologies to an audience that is not India” (Kumar 1-5). Shobhan Saxena points out as to how:

The west is once again using our poverty to humiliate us. Seeing the award as a stamp of disapproval on India’s poor social indicators, a recently published Indian author calls *The White Tiger* “a tourist’s account of India”. He raises questions about the intentions of Adiga who grew up in Australia and went to elite universities in England and the U.S....Adiga’s story may remain the view of a professional observer, who failed to see anything good about the country he travelled through as a journalist, always recording and never experiencing anything real. It could be mere suspicion, but it takes care of our guilt. (Saxena, 12)

Author and playwright Manjula Padmanabhan dismissed it as "a tedious, unfunny slog."<sup>3</sup> But Gurucharan Das, author and commentator makes a very pertinent and balanced remark that “A book should not be judged on the basis of whether it creates a negative or positive picture of a country. It should be seen as a work of art and judged on its literary merits. If it is a good book, it’s a good book and it deserves an award” (*Sunday Times of India*, Oct.19, 2008). In fact, Adiga as a social critic, boldly comments on the social conditions of India arising from global economy. He discovers a new India where, migration of labour is changing their lifestyle, traditional values and old ties with their roots and culture of these people. He points out that it becomes significant for a writer like him to feature remorseless injustices of Indian society especially during a time when India is undergoing great transformation in different spheres—economic, social, cultural and political. He makes it clear that his endeavour in doing so is not an assailment on the country; instead it's about the great self-examination process. He further defends his point by elaborating on the fact that criticisms by writers like Flaubert, Dickens and Balzac during the 19th century helped England and France improve their ways to become a better place to live in. Adiga himself says that his novel attempts to look at what kind of man would be prepared to break the structure. Through Balram Halwai’s letters, Adiga articulates the subaltern experiences.

Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines subaltern as an officer in the British Army below the rank of Captain. According to Spivak, “Subaltern studies consider the bottom layer of society” (Chaturvedi, 324). ‘Subaltern’ is an umbrella term which refers to poor farmers, factory workers, lower ranks among government servants, women, tribal’s and other marginalized sections of the society. In the post-colonial dialectics ‘subaltern’ or ‘underclass’ occupies prominent place which

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<sup>3</sup> <http://jang.com.pk/thenews/nov2008-weekly/nos-30-11-2008/instep/article2.htm> June25, 2011.

incorporates the entire people that is subordinate in terms of class, caste, age, gender, and office, or in any other way. It is the subject position that defines subalternity. Even when it operates in terms of class, age and gender, it is more psychological than physical. The lack and deprivation, loneliness and alienation, subjugation and subordination, the resignation and silence, the resilience and neglect, mark the lives of subaltern. Even when they resist and rise up, they feel bounded and defeated by their subject positions. They have no representatives or spokesperson in the society they live in and so helplessly suffer and get marginal place or no place at all in the history and culture of which they are the essential part as human beings.

Keeping Balram's story in view, the novel studies the antithesis between the rise of India as a modern global economy—where the rich zoom around in their egg-like shelled cars which only crack open to let a bejeweled hand of a lady to throw an empty mineral bottle into the street. On the other hand, all that Balram represents is a typical voice of underclass struggling to set free from age-old slavery and exploitation metaphorically described as “Rooster coop”. His anger, protest, indulgence in criminal acts, prostitution, drinking, chasing, grabbing of all the opportunities through fair or foul means, endorse deep-rooted frustration and consequent outrage against the “haves”. Bloody acts, opportunism, entrepreneurial success of Balram and emergence of Socialists in India, alarm that the voice of the underclass cannot be ignored for long. Balram’s transformation from Munna to Balram Halwai and from Balram to the ‘White Tiger’ is the blue print for the rise of underclass. The underclass is the result of our polity, bureaucratic set-up, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, caste and culture conflict, superstitions, social taboos, dowry practice, economic disparity, Zamindari system, corrupt education system, poor health services, police and judicial working. These forces collectively operate to perpetuate the underclass. This underclass largely constitutes ‘Dark India’. Darkness is the symbol of ignorance, poverty, illiteracy, deprivation and backwardness.

The novel can also be assessed as a socialist manifesto trying to dismantle the discrimination between the “Big Bellies and the Small Bellies” (64) to evolve an egalitarian society. Adiga has captured, quite unbelievably, the psyche and thought processes of the Indian underdog. He is quite pictorial in his description of the protagonist Balram who is not only an underdog but is also quite a nasty dog to boot. He is, in fact, booted by one and all— his family, his fellow servants, his employers and by society in general. He’s a survival expert who uses his conspicuous corpus of native wit to outwit his oppressors. The novel being a rags-to-riches story,

its entire plot pivots around Balram Halwai, the son of a rickshaw puller who hails from the suppressed, under-privileged societal fringes of Laxmangarh, Bihar. While serving his rich master as a driver, he learns the art of entrepreneurship and himself becomes a great entrepreneur by killing his own master after robbing him of all his money. His life story begins at his first day in school when he finds that he has got neither a name nor a date of birth. His mother being too ill with tuberculosis and his father too busy in his work as a rickshaw puller, his birth remains unrecorded. His early life is spent in the "India of Darkness." He is forced to leave school at an early age to work in a tea shop. This India has no clean water or electricity and is populated by children who are thin, emaciated and hungry. The teacher charges for the lunch provided for the students by the government because he is not being paid. The political leader, the Great Socialist, has lost interest in fighting the corruption that he claimed he would stop. All this shows as to how people are obsessed with the idea of going ahead at the cost of humanity. Balram calls his own story as, "The Autobiography of a Half-Baked India" (10) because he thinks, "Entrepreneurs are made from half-baked clay" (11). Their curse is that they have to watch their business all the time.

Before beginning his story, as the Greeks invoked Muse, he prays to gods to illumine on his dark story. The zest not to remain a slave is strong in Balram Halwai. He quotes from Iqbal whom he considers as one of the best four poets: "They remain Slaves because they cannot see what is beautiful in the world" (40). Balram is self-taught entrepreneur. He confesses, "I am in the light now, but I was born and raised in the Darkness" (4). Through first letter, Adiga contrasts the two Indias, "...India is two countries in one: An India of Light, and an India of Darkness. The ocean brings light to my country. Every place on the map of India near the ocean is well-off. But the river brings darkness to India-the black river" (14). Representing the emerging darkness enveloping the lives of the poor, the holy 'river of illumination', 'breaker of the chain of birth and rebirth' is no longer a source of life for plants, animals and people. It is polluted with "straw, soggy parts of human bodies, buffalo, carion and seven different kinds of industrial acids" (15). No doubt, recent materialistic development has multiplied the wealth of the country and the sources of pleasure and comfort have increased. Now, we are in the blind race of accumulating more and more wealth and consuming the materialistic pleasures to every possible extent. A new religion of society i.e. mammon worship comes into fashion which leads to the corrosion of values and erosion of humanity. Edward Carpenter's critique of industrial civilization rightly underlines the erosion of values, ethics and natural 'self' while we are taking pride in the transforming world:

The limitless increase of man's powers of production brought on by advent of modern science and technology, draws him away (1) from nature,(2) from his true self, (3) from his fellows and it works in every way to disintegrate and corrupt man-literally to corrupt – to break up the unity of his nature. (Carpenter, 46-49)

It is depicted in the novel that people are so much obsessed with the success motive and of hunting malignity that they do not care for relations and losing faith in God. Balram tells “the entrepreneur's curse is that he has to watch his business all the time” (7). In India it is believed that there are 36,000, 004 gods. Balram says that these gods are very much like politicians who do awfully little work “and yet keep winning re-election to their golden thrones in heaven, year after year”(8). To him, politics to Indians is a game played through media and All India Radio. The health minister announces to eliminate malaria, the Union Budget announces special budget for the upliftment of the poor and underprivileged and the corporate houses promise one and all through glossy products, but in Indian context, they seem to add to the darkness of the poor. The author however, comments, “This is the kind of news they feed us on All India Radio, night after night: and tomorrow at dawn it'll be in the papers too. People just swallow this crap. Night after night, morning after morning. Amazing, isn't it? (291). Satirising the essential hypocrisy prevailing among Indians, Adiga remarks that “the Indian entrepreneur has to be straight and crooked, mocking and believing, sly and sincere, at the same time” (9). The quest for upward mobility is so absorbing that moral values, religious beliefs and traditional way of life are losing relevance.

Political system and beaurocratic set up, according to the novel, refer to the darkest areas of our country which breed, “rottenness and corruption” (50) in our society and hamper all developmental and welfare schemes. It restricts half of this country from achieving its potential. Most of the politicians are “half-baked. That's the whole tragedy of this country” (10). The story of Balram's emergence is the story of how a half-baked fellow is produced. Politics is the last refuge for scoundrels. Government doctors, entrepreneurs, tax payers and industrialists all have to befriend a minister and his sidekick to fulfill their vested interests. In the novel, *The White Tiger*, Mukesh and Ashok also bribe the minister to settle income tax accounts. The doctors who are employed to work in the government hospital never come to hospital because they need to work at a private hospital to pay for their bribes. Elections, though we feel proud of glorious democracy of ours, are manipulated; power transfers from one hand to another but the common man's fate remains unchanged. Adiga considers, “Typhoid, Cholera and election fever the three main diseases of this country and the last one the worst” (98). Booth capturing and cash for votes being quite

common, voters discuss about the election helplessly as “eunuchs discussing the Kama Sutra” (98). Money-bags, muscle power, police, strategic alignment of various factions and power to woo the underclass assure the victory in the political game. Balram reports: “I am India’s most faithful voter, and I still have not seen the inside of a voting booth” (102). Adiga observes that we are lagging behind China because of “this fucked up system called parliamentary democracy. Otherwise, we’d be just like China.” (156)

This rotten system has created new distinctions and classes. Adiga remarks that in the old days there were one thousand castes and destinies in India but now we are divided between just two castes: “Men with Big Bellies, and Men with Small Bellies. And only two destinies: eat—or get eaten up” (64). With the British leaving India after Independence, the cages were let open; and the “animals” (metaphorically for politicians) attacked and ripped each other. These opportunist politicians largely capitalized on the ignorance of the people. The most ferocious and the hungriest among them had eaten everyone else up, to grow big bellies. According to Adiga, that was all that counted now, the size of your bellies. It didn’t “matter whether you were a woman, or a Muslim, or an untouchable—anyone with a belly could rise up” (64). Kiran Desai also makes hard-hitting attack on the corrupt political system in India: “Not one truthful politician in the whole country. Yes, our, parliament is made of thieves, each one answerable to the Prime Minister, who is the biggest thief of them all” (Desai, 20). In the Booker Prize winning novel, *The Inheritance of Loss*, out of fifty- three chapters, more than eighteen chapters are exclusively devoted to describe insurgency rampant in the whole country for separate states. Like Adiga, Desai also curtly blames the policy makers for this: “This state making, the biggest mistake that fool Nehru made. Under his rules any group of idiots can stand up demanding a new state and get it, too...it all started with Sikkim. The Neps played such a dirty trick and began to get grand ideas— now they think they can do the same thing again” (Desai, 128). According to Desai, “The partition of India” is the result of wrong policies of our Government, which she calls the “first heart-attack to our country...that has never been healed”. (Desai, 129)

*The White Tiger* is a tale of underclass and it’s life-begging for food, sleeping under concrete flyovers, defecating on the roadside, shivering in the cold, struggling in the twenty first century, for the freedom they are yet to achieve. The Noble Laureate of Indian origin, V.S. Naipaul has also highlighted the darkness of India in his *Area of Darkness* (1964) where he defines India as a nation characterised by, “rigid caste distinction” (Naipaul, 53), “English mimicry” (Naipaul,

55), “Indian lavatory and kitchens—the visitors’ nightmare” (Naipaul, 58), “clubs of Bombay and Delhi...poverty” (Naipaul, 62-66), “misfortunes of refugee family” (Naipaul, 68), underclass denied of opportunities; lack of hygiene and sense of sanitation, “Indians defecating everywhere” (Naipaul, 70), “labour ... degradation” (Naipaul, 73), “symbolic actions,” unethical businessman (Naipaul, 80); and irrational “reservation policy placing responsibility in the hands of the unqualified”( Naipaul, 82).

It is extreme poverty which creates Darkness in the life of the rural as well as urban people and it perpetuates the sufferings of the underclass. Illiteracy, unemployment, Zamindari practice, social taboos, rigid caste discrimination, caste and culture conflict, corrupt politicians and bureaucrats, economic disparity, superstitions, corrupt education system and health services, shrewd entrepreneurs, flood, mall culture etc. contribute in the sufferings of underclass. It is poverty in Laxamangarh, there is an exodus of jobless youths towards big cities in Gaya, and the protagonist Balram Halwai and his brother are no exception. *The White Tiger* portrays the men working in the tea shop in the words: “...better to call them human spiders that go crawling in between and under the tables with rags in their hands, crushed humans in crushed uniforms, sluggish, unshaven, in their thirties or forties or fifties but still ‘boys’...” (51). The rest of the village waits in a big group outside the shop. When the buses come, they get on to go to Gaya where they rush into the train—pack the inside, hang from the railings, climb onto the roofs—and go to Delhi, Calcutta and Dhanbad to find work. A month before the rain, the men come back from Dhanbad, Delhi and Culcutta—leaner, darker, angrier, but with money in their pockets. The women wait for them. They hide behind the door, and as soon as the men walk in, they pounce, like wild cats on a slab of flesh (26). It is poverty which compels Balram—*The White Tiger* to leave the school and work in a tea stall washing utensils and doing every kind of menial jobs.

In the poverty-stricken society, young kids are given no formal names but “Munna: which just means boy” (15). Neither the mother nor the father is concerned about the name. Balram reports: “mother’s very ill...she lies in bed and spews blood. She’s got no time to name and father is a rickshaw puller...he’s got no time to name me” (15). It is the school teacher who names him Balram and marks his age in the school ledger. The poors like Balram carry no significant history with them except the history of pains. Vikram Halwai, Balram’s father who is hit by poverty and tough manual work, narrates the history of his life replete with sufferings. Balram reports:

A rich man's body is like a premium cotton pillow, white and soft and blank. Ours are different. My father's spine was a knotted rope, the kind that women use in village to pull water from wells; the clavicle curved around his neck in high relief, like a dog's collar; cuts and nicks and scars, like little whip marks in his flesh, ran down his chest and waist, reaching down below his hipbones into his buttocks. The story of a poor man's life is written on his body, in a sharp pen. (26-27)

The rich poor divide is one of the most common themes in the contemporary Indian writing in English; Kiran Desai also makes similar description of Cook and his poverty writ large on his body in *The Inheritance of Loss*. The discrimination is so common that even the dogs of the rich people are taken as superior to the poor because, the colonial stigma still marks the lives of the poor when they are reminded of the typical signboards (Dogs and Indians are not allowed) displaying on the gates of five-star hotels by the discrimination meted out to them so much so that the dogs of the rich are held with more respect than the servants.

The rich expect their dogs to be treated like human, you see—they expect their dogs to be pampered, and walked, and petted, and even washed! And guess who had to do the washing? I got down on my knees and began scrubbing the dogs, and then lathering them, and foaming them, and then washing them down, and taking a blow dryer and drying their skin. Then I took them around the compound on a chain while the king of Nepal sat in a corner and shouted, 'Don't pull the chain so hard! They're worth more than you are!' (78)

Balram finds that poor have no space for malls. The security guards at these shopping malls identify the poor wearing sandals and let in only those wearing shoes. Balram's job is to carry all the shopping bags as they come out of the malls. He has to face the mean and stingy behavior of Mongoose who insults him for not having retrieved a rupee coin he has lost while getting out of the car. He was so bothered about a rupee coin after bribing someone with a million rupees, "Get down on your knees. Look for it on the floor of the car" (139). Balram all the time feels humiliated for his lack of an English education for which Ashok and Pinky Madam make fun of him. They get so engaged in humiliating him that they even forget their quarrels. When he mispronounces "Maal" for "maal" they have their ironic laughter. Pronunciation of 'pizza' is equally embarrassing for him. On Pinky Madam's birthday, Balram is made to dress up like a maharaja with a red turban and dark cooling glasses and serve them food. To amuse herself, the lady traps Balram to repeat 'pizza' as Balram always pronounces it piJJA. He has to suffer humiliation in the hands of his masters with ever increasing menial duties which climaxes in his being blackmailed when Ashok's wife Pinky kills a man in drunken driving. He is forced to sign a statement accepting full

responsibility for the accident. So the morality and ethical values are ignored as much as the humanity itself, by the people like Ashok, Pinky, Mongoose and their entire family.

Zamindari practice is also a powerful source of exploitation and subjugation of underclass. Buffalo, Stork, Wild Boar and Raven are four landlords who have got these names because of the peculiar appetite to suck the blood of the poor. Stork owns the river that flows outside the village, and he takes “a cut of every catch of fish caught by every fisherman in the river, and a toll from every boatman who crossed the river” (24) to reach Laxamangarh. Wild Boar, his brother owns all the fertile agricultural land around Laxamangarh. Men who want to work on those lands “had to bow down to his feet, and touch the dust under his slippers, and agree to swallow his day wages” (25). The Raven owns the worst land, which is dry, rocky hillside around the fort, and “took a cut from the goatherds who went up there to graze with their flocks. If they didn’t have their money, he liked to dip his beak into their backsides” (25). The Buffalo is the greediest of all. He has “eaten up the rickshaws and the roads. So if you ran a rickshaw, or used the road, you had to pay him his feed—one-third of whatever you earned, no less” (25). Due to their exploitative tendencies, Adiga calls them “Animals” (25) who lives in high-walled mansion, their own wells and ponds, and don’t need to come out into the village except to feed. These landlords also align with regional political parties for their selfish motives. With the emergence of Naxalism, these landlords have sent their sons and daughters to Dhanbad or Delhi. The lavish marriage of Balram’s cousin Reena and lavish dowry compels them to borrow huge amount of loan from Stork, who in lieu of that demands all members of the family to work for him and so Balram is pulled out of the school and starts working at tea shop where he gets, “better education” than “at any school” (38) of life and its grim realities. But his rebellious spirit echoes the voice: “I was destined not to stay a slave” (41). The world of Darkness abounds with social taboos, rigid caste distinction, superstitions, and caste and culture conflict.

In India man is known and recognized by his caste. Caste System has become so firm in the mind of the Hindus that they regard it as a very natural institution. The word ‘caste’ is of Spanish and Portuguese origin. It means lineage or race. It is derived from the Latin word ‘Custus’, which means ‘pure’. The Spaniards were the first to use it, but its Indian application is from the Portuguese, who had so applied it in the middle of the fifteenth century. The Indian idea of caste vaguely applies to the hereditary classes as Tennyson in *Lady Clara Vere de Vere* defines:

Her manners had not that repose  
Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

Indian social set up is largely governed by the caste system to the extent that all the social-sector schemes and policies are devised after considering the caste equations. The reservation to SC/ST and OBC is also practiced to ensure equal opportunities to the citizens belonging to lower castes. Even the political parties consider the caste factor as the most important while distributing tickets to the candidates seeking to contest elections. The ‘caste’ which is so important is defined by Sir H. Risley as follows:

A caste may be defined as a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name which usually denotes or is associated with specific occupation, claiming common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine, professing to follow the same professional callings and are regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community.<sup>4</sup>

In the novel, the old driver of Stork asks Balram: “What caste are you? (56). Similar question is asked by Stork: “Halwai...What caste is that, top or bottom?” (62). Ram Persad, the servant of Stork disguised his identity because the prejudiced landlord doesn’t like Muslim. He claims to be a Hindu just to get a job and feed his starving family. On disclosure, he is sacked from the job. While playing cricket, Roshan, the grandson of Stork calls himself Azaruddin, the Captain of India. Stork reacts quickly, “call yourself Gavasker. Azaruddin is a Muslim” (70). The marriage of Ashok and Pinky is not appreciated by the society because Pinky is not a Hindu. Later, due to caste and cultural differences, their relationship is snapped. Socio-cultural slavery is perpetuated in our society by elites through the process of socialization. The ‘Rooster Coop’ works because of the “Indian family” (176) and poor are trapped and tied to the ‘Coop’. Only a man who dares to see his family—hunted, beaten, and burnt alive by the masters, can come out of the ‘Coop’ that would not be a normal human being but a White Tiger. “Marriage” brings “more rain in the village” (190), “any diseases, of body or mind, get cured when you penetrate a virgin” (193), “His buffalo died at once” because he “stopped believing in God” (186) etc. are the superstitions common in the society. The practice of dowry is another social stigma in Laxamangarh. The marriage of Balram’s cousin Reena pushes the whole family into the world of misery and Balram is dropped from the school. Kishan’s marriage also brings huge dowry which Balram reports: “It was one of the good marriages. We had the boy, and we screwed the girl’s family hard. I remember exactly

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.isec.ac.in/History%20of%20caste%20in%20India.pdf>

what we got in dowry...five thousand rupees in cash, all crisp new unsoiled notes fresh from the bank, plus a Hero bicycle, plus a thick gold necklace for Kishan”(51). The life of underclass darkens when corrupt and defunct education system operates in the society. In Laxamangarh, there is a typical school teacher called, “big Paan—and spit Man” (29), who goes to sleep by noon, and drinks toddy in the school. Supply of free food to the school goes to the teacher who gives legitimate excuse for it –“he hadn’t been paid his salary in six months” (33). Truck full of uniform that government had sent to school is not issued to the children, “but a week later they turned up for sale in the neighbouring village” (33).

The whole education system is governed by the “crowd of thugs and idiots” (35), which Adiga calls “Jungle” (35). Poor health services and non-implementation of government policies expose the rampant malpractices which collectively enhance the miseries of the poor. In Laxamangarh, there are three different foundation stones for a hospital, laid by three different politicians before three different elections. Balram’s father dies due to the lack of hospital and medical facilities. Medical services are shown as an object of political mockery and social stigma. The Great Socialist inaugurates Lohia Universal Free Hospital in view of election result, but there is no doctor in the hospital and the rooms are not hygienic. Balram observes:

Cat has tasted blood. A couple of Muslim men had spread a newspaper on the ground and were sitting on it. One of them had an open wound on his leg. He invited us to sit with him and his friend. Kishan and I lowered father onto the newspaper sheets. We waited there ...the Muslim men kept adding newspapers to the ground, and the line of diseased eyes, raw wounds, and delirious mouths kept growing.(48-49)

Similarly, corruption in public life is highlighted in the novel where the government has provided the health facilities for namesake as there is neither a doctor in the dispensary, nor there is a hygienic environ for the patients:

The post of doctor is auctioned because there is good money in public service and doctor gets the job offering bribe and touching the feet of the great Socialist—the employer. Subsequently, “you can keep the rest of your government salary and go work in some private hospital for the rest of the week. Forget the village. Because according to this ledger you’ve been there. You’ve treated my wounded leg. You’ve healed that girl’s jaundice. (50)

While the novel moves from country to city, the whole world of underclass also migrates—sometimes to get rid of exploitation and sufferings and at other times to add to their sufferings. The cities are shown stuffed with the labourers working in the industrial set-up, taxi and auto drivers, servants, prostitutes, beggars, poor and shivering lots hiding under flyovers, slum-dwellers

and corrupt police. The novel presents a harsh and sarcastic view of the existing legal and administrative structure, being hijacked by the corrupt politicians, businessmen and the touts. Big cities like Delhi and Bangalore witness both kinds of India—as an emerging economy and as the nation housing largest poor population. Balram’s journey from Laxmangarh to Dhanbad, then to Delhi, and finally to Bangalore, endorses that the socio-psychological condition of the underclass remains unchanged. Though the cities provide ample opportunities for employment and mobility, psyche of the upper class is identical everywhere—whether it is a landlord, politician, police official, bureaucrat, upper caste person, rich man, industrialist or an entrepreneur. Underclass is trapped everywhere in ‘Rooster Coop’ and is engaged in the struggle to come out of the cage.

Balram is the conscience of underprivileged—their anger, frustration, protest and revenge always ready to adopt a new moral code of conduct to succeed in life. Murder of Ashok by Balram is the result of deep-rooted frustration of deprived soul experiencing the polarities between the upper class and lower class. Apart from these, pollution, hectic routine of life, harmful effects of mobile, impact of city culture etc. create new territories of darkness in India. India is shown as an emerging entrepreneurial power in the world as advancement in the field of science and technology, space, transportation, hotel industry, tourism, real estate, expansion of cities, mall culture, industries and outsourcing etc. characterize the image of India. But all these developmental activities come in sharp contrast to the plight of millions of poor. The novel portrays:

Thousands of people live on the sides of the road in Delhi. They have come from the Darkness too—you can tell by their bodies, filthy faces, by the animal-like way they live under the huge bridges and overpasses, making fires and washing and taking lice out of their hair while the cars roar past them. These homeless people...never wait for a red light. (119-120)

It is paradoxical that these poor bastards had come from the ‘Darkness’ to Delhi to find some light—but they could cherish no hope for themselves. For them, “To live under some concrete bridge, begging for their food and without hope for the future. That’s not much better than being dead” (314-315). Auto and taxi drivers constitute a big fragment of underclass inhabiting in the cities. Balram is a true prototype of this class manifesting miseries of their life, humiliation, struggle, dreams and involvement in criminal and illegal activities. Balram as a chauffeur is hired by Stork, a village landlord for his son Ashok, daughter-in-law Pinky and their two Pomeranian dogs. From behind the Wheel of a Honda City, Balram first sees Delhi. The city is a revelation for the tigers like Balram. Amid the cockroaches and call-centres, the 36,000,004

gods, the slums, the shopping malls and the crippling traffic jams, Balram's re-education begins. Under the conflict between two opposite thoughts, to be a loyal son and servant or to fulfill his desire to better himself, he devises a new morality at the heart of a new India. Drivers also carry out the work of a servant washing utensils, brooming the floors, cooking, massaging, scrubbing, lathering and drying the skin of dogs; they sell drugs, prostitutes and read with full enthusiasm *Murder Weekly* because, "a billion servants are secretly fantasizing about strangling their bosses" (125). There is no space for the poor in the malls of *New India*. According to Balram, the worst part of being a driver is:

You have hours to yourself while waiting for your employer. You can spend this time chit-chatting and scratching your groin. You can read murder and rape magazines. You can develop the chauffeur's habit—it's a kind of yoga, really—of putting a finger in your nose and letting your mind go blank for hours (they should call it 'bored driver's asana). You can sneak a bottle of Indian liquor into the car—boredom makes drunks of so many honest drivers. (149)

Drivers are not only made to serve their masters beyond a dignified limit, but they are also supposed to own the responsibility for the crimes their masters commit:

Drivers and servants are also forced to confess the crime their masters have committed. Though they earn some extra income but they remain servant. Balram is so much disgusted of the life of a slave that he never feels guilty of Ashok's murder. He wants to experience "just for a day, just for an hour, just for a minute, what it means not to be a servant. (321)

Prostitution is another dark area of India of Light. In the big cities, most of the women are forced to adopt this profession due to poverty. In Dhanbad, Delhi and Bangalore, there are red light areas where one can negotiate a price with these women who are taken as commodities which are labelled, "High class or low class? Virgin or non-virgin?" (227). In Delhi, especially rich people prefer "golden-haired women" (232). Forgery is also involved in this racket and suppliers present a woman dyed in golden hair to snatch the maximum price. Nepali girls, Ukrainian students and poor labourers from the village working in construction of mall, allow their women for prostitution. Corrupt police and eroding legal and administrative structure mark off another dark spot of shining India. Police masterminds the forced out confession to protect the rich men from the legal proceedings and get huge money in lieu of that. The hit and run case which legally belongs to Pinky is shifted to Balram: "The jails of Delhi are full of drivers who are there behind the bars because they are taking the blame for their good, solid middle-class masters. We have left the villages, but the masters still own us, body, soul, and arse" (170). Even judges ignore to see forced

confession, because they “are in the racket too. They take their bribe; they ignore the discrepancies in the case. And life goes on” (170). The close nexus between criminals, police and media persons is also exposed. Balram Halwai is transformed into Ashok Sharma—a Bangalore based successful entrepreneur who is confident that he is “one of those who cannot be caught in India” (320). Entrepreneurial success and modern city culture has deep rooted impact on our life. A man – innocent and rustic turns into a new man—selfish, opportunist and criminal, which is the greatest harm to humanity. Balram’s journey from Laxamangarh to Dhanbad, then to Delhi and finally to Bangalore, proves this loss. The corrupting and spoling influence of the metropolitan culture gets highlighted in the lines: “All these changes happened in me because they happened first in Mr. Ashok. He returned from America an innocent man, but life in Delhi corrupted him—and once the master of Honda City becomes corrupted, how can the driver stay innocent?.”(197)

The novel exposes the ferociousness of the man who after bloodletting through murder turns out to be a man-eater himself. What guarantees if he will not commit murders for reasons of rivalry in his entrepreneurial world of cut-throat competition. Revenge murder is no solution to bring about social justice. Subscribing to his principle of taking law into his own hands, will lead only to anarchy and escalation of violence. Here one is reminded of W.B. Yeats’ lines in "The Second Coming" which were written in the background of Russian revolution as well as the Irish unrest:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood–dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity (Yeats 1700)

Balram confesses before Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao that he cannot get rid of blood stains on his conscience, his personal guilt of realizing his ambition through murder turns political and morally bankrupt, but the novel as Shashi Deshpande defines is “a mirror to realities”(Deshpande,1). Here the new economy means shiny call centre workers still in air conditioned towers overlooking filthy shanties and where an entrepreneur can survive the shine and grime of bureaucracy only by

greasing the palms. We also hear about India's technological advancement, India leading the IT sector, India feeding itself and having enough to export, its modernization, its ability to juxtapose the old and the new. But it is often the Diaspora Indian writer who sees the contradictions and writes about it.

The novel is like the movie *Slum Dog Millionaire* directed by Danny Boyle. The slums of Bombay are mind-boggling sight to every visitor to India. But the middle class Indians roll up the tinted glass windows of their Toyota and drive in air-conditioned comfort. *Slum Dog Millionaire* is based on a novel under the same title by Vikas Swarup. It is the story of a Mumbai teenager from the slums who dares to contest in the Indian version of the popular television programme "who wants to be a millionaire" the teenage here enthral his audience with his answers. He is just one question away from winning 20 million rupees when he is suspected of cheating and is arrested. The investigation reveals in flashback his life story in the slums and the specific incidents which enabled him to answer the questions in the contest. So it is quite clear that the wants, aspirations and social mobility cannot be overlooked. Adiga also shows this reality in his novel *The White Tiger*.

Material affluence and man's lust for possession are the result of the growth of market economy. The lust for money is the worst manifestation of this industrial progress. Both the rich and the poor become insensitive to the real urges of life. Money not only kills the inner life of a man, it also interferes with human relationships. This is an obvious fact of modern life, a part of our daily experience. So Adiga's portrayal of a world of crime, corruption and wealth cannot be dismissed as mere exaggeration or distortion of reality for foreigners. It is too real to be dismissed as unconvincing.

Balam betrays constant wavering to commit murder. It shows that he is not a mindless murderer, but he finds that murder is the only means to break the shackles of bondage he is trapped into. He has no other alternative to realize his dream. He feels that he has done a "wrong thing" which has darkened his soul: "All the skin whitening creams sold in the market of India won't clean my hands again" (318). One must remember Lady Macbeth uttering the same thought in an agonized state of mind: "All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand", which seems to bear the stain of blood after Duncan's murder. (qtd. in Sargent, 53)

The novel is replete with examples where the essential human dignity is violated in one pretext or the other. Balram Halwai emerges as an epitome of millions of poors subjected to perpetual exploration not by the foreign invaders but by their fellow countrymen. The story of Balram is obviously the story of every Indian who fails to make it to an aspiring career in the beginning but who bears in his heart a grudge against the society, and so he happens to retaliate ferociously. The present research intends to explore the gap between two extremes which characterise postmodern India—extreme poverty and one of the most vibrant economy of the world. Globalisation and its allied forces have undoubtedly transformed the Indian socio-cultural, political and economic set up but what is more crucial is the tendency towards upward mobility.

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