



Grow India & Glow India -A Critical Study with Reference to Aravind Adiga's "The White Tiger"

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ABSTRACT:

Modern INDIA has taken a new position in the world scenario its great evolution in start-up entrepreneurship. This great success is built on the innovative ideas of entrepreneurs with advanced technology and within these recent two decades the city of Bangalore has become the leading city for successful entrepreneurship. Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* pictures immense growth of Balram Halwai, a "Thinking Man and an Entrepreneur" and the writer portrays the slippery, dark steps of the success ladder that each Indian has to cross before reaching the heights of 'great success'. Balram narrates the story of himself to Premier Wen Jiabao, the Chinese Excellency, who planned to arrive in India to hear stories of success from successful Indian entrepreneurs.

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INTRODUCTION:

"Fair is foul, Foul is fair" –The quotes of Shakespeare in Macbeth make meaning for themselves in Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* through the character of Balram Halwai. For him, any action taken on the path of progress is the right action. The touchstone of success makes the foul fair and all the fairness is accompanied by successful entrepreneurs. The poetic lines "You were looking for the key for years /But the door was always open" (1) penetrate his mind provoking him to look for opportunities to murder Ashok and to loot his money, for his progress. Balram Halwai had his ideal model in Vijay, the bus conductor who was seen with respect by his family members in the village. The growth of Vijay as a powerful politician made Balram kick the opportunity door and become Ashok Sharma – "The White Tiger". He announces to Mr.Premier that he "never wants to be a servant"(2)and breaks out of the rooster coop of being a slave who can be slaughtered at any time.



THE GREAT INDIAN ROOSTER COOP:

The Rooster Coop is the metaphor that runs throughout the story and it demonstrates the way in which every Indian is tamed to be a silent watcher. For Balram, the Indians are the World's most honest people and caught in the rooster coop like those in the poultry market. He critically enquires "The Great Indian Rooster Coop. Do you have something like it in China too? I doubt it, Mr. Jiabao (3). He pictures the Rooster Coop in his letter as a horrible picture saying "Hundreds of pale hens and brightly coloured roosters stuffed tightly in wire mess cages, packed tightly as tightly as worms in a belly, pecking each other and shitting on each other, jostling just for breathing space: the whole cage giving off a horrible stench-the stench of terrified, feathered flesh. (4). Balram feels the same as he is forced to accept the ill-treatment and threats from his own family and the Stork family. His granny Kusum exploited the earning members in his family which makes him comment "There were red, curried bone and flesh in front of me that they have served me flesh from Kishan's own body on that plate" (5). He does not like the marriage system used as a trap to get exploited and later he even forgets his family when he becomes rich and never worries about their death as revenge by the stork family. He makes himself different from other servants by his courage and he recognizes that being bold is beautiful in the world and achieves his success in the end.

HOW BIG CAN YOU THINK?

The streaming of multinational companies in India and their posh shopping malls, techno products in magnificent buildings, and the American wines and liquor shops along with their Information Technological Organizations is making Indians step out of their weak economic conditions. "The Silicon Valley of India" i.e., Bangalore invites Balram with all comforts and splashes the big question "How Big Can You Think?"(5) before him. It lashes him with good riches like twenty-six Toyota Qualises, silver laptop, chandelier, and the great name of a successful entrepreneur. It gives him the courage to overcome the fear of killing Ashok and now he repays his respect to Ashok, by changing his name to Ashok Sharma, "The White Tiger". This city makes him to think big and different, and even makes him to step into the real-estate business for the Americans and also set up an English-language school. "A school where you won't be allowed to corrupt anyone's head with prayers and stories about God and Gandhi-nothing but the facts about life for these kids. A school full of White Tigers, unleashed on Bangalore. We'd have the city at our knees, I tell you. I could become the Boss of Bangalore" (6) Balram unlike a normal Man never feels guilty of his crime but casually comments "But isn't likely that everyone who counts in this world including our prime minister(including you, Mr. Jiabao) has killed someone or other on their way to the top?. Kill enough people and they will put up bronze statues to you near Parliament House in Delhi- but that is glory, and not what I am after. All I wanted was the chance to be a man- and for that, one murder was enough" (7). Balram never attains his heights in a moralistic way but with higher risk and strenuous planning.

RESPECT FOR THE LAW IS THE FIRST COMMAND OF THE GODS

The laws of this nation are imposed on the have-nots and on the meek people who doesn't have gruel to quench their hunger. The politicians, rich men, the pimps, and the frauds like the conductor Vijay gain their profits and flourish everywhere in the world. Balram's father, a richshaw puller died as there were no doctors to treat him in the government hospitals. The Rooster Coop becomes the apt example for the homeless, moneyless humans whose life get slaughtered to death just to serve the rich class. But ironically, the man of power uses laws to hoard power, and wealth and to cheat government. The poor are not allowed inside the mall and he with the sandals exploded "Am I not a human being too?"(8).The poor people were just left with questions like "Is there no space for the Poor in the new Malls of India"(9).Apart from these cruel facts they were again dragged to the dirty ditch of slavery by their own kith and kin. "The Indian family, is the reason we are trapped and tied to the coop"(10)Balram's granny Kusum tempts him for marriage so that he will be trapped for ever to serve her.



Again, caste also confines a man and hence, throws him to a coop. A Halwai, as it indicates is fit for making sweets and tea and one who is brought up with this idea never thinks or imagines himself for other profession outside the coop “See, Halwai, my name means “sweet –maker”. That’s my caste- my destiny. Everyone in the darkness who hears that name knows all about me at once. Ah, we’re Halwais, making sweets and tea in our blood” (11). In the name of God also, the poor gets cheated for they are made to serve their master like Hanuman and take Him to be their ideal. While serving the Stork family Balram often considers Pinky madam as Sita, Ashok sir as Ram and himself to be Hanuman who serves them. “I would drive them wherever they want, as faithful as the servant-god Hanuman carried about his master and mistress: Ram and Sita”(12). In the name of god, caste and family sentiments Balram is dragged into the pits of slavery, from his childhood days. He too is breaded and trained to be a good servant, but the treatment of the stroke family, Ashok and Pinky madam, made him took the avtar of a brutal killer. But he has his nervousness for four weeks “Sir, I am not a politician or a Parliamentarian. Not one of those extra-ordinary men who kill and move on, as if nothing had happened. It took me four weeks in Bangalore to calm my nerves.” (13)

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF HALF-BAKED INDIAN

Aravind Adiga’s juxtaposition of the main character’s personality is remarkable in the novel. The character’s personality is changed from the half-baked, uneducated, slum boy’s sincerity and dedication of a loyal servant to the light of a successful entrepreneur in modern India especially in the digital city of Bangalore. Balram mockingly describes his story to Wen Jiabao representing millions of Indians who are intelligent, talented but defied schooling because of the corruption of the educational system or the extreme criticism and exploitation of their own family people. As a schoolboy Balram has a good reading skills and was commented as “the smartest of the lot”. The inspector praised him as “You, Youngman, are an intelligent, honest, vivacious fellow in this crowd of thugs and idiots” (14). He hailed him as the rarest animal “The White Tiger” and presented him with a book ”Lessons for Young Boys from the life of Mahatma Gandhi”. But all his dreams got erased as the family had to repay the loan got for the lavish wedding of his cousin sister and he was made as a coal-breaker in a teashop. The hero is portrayed as a challenging personality who never complains or mourns for what he is, but an adopter of situations and discomforts and a person with a thriving capacity to make an excellent way as a successful entrepreneur. Balram adjusts to his family situation and enjoys the work as he says “I gave myself better education at the tea shop than I could have got at any school.” (15). He has all the essential qualities of an entrepreneur for he takes all bad luck as opportunities and comments ”Working in a tea shop, smashing coals, wiping tables, to break the law of his land-To turn bad news into good news- is the entrepreneur’s prerogative”(16). As a grown-up man, he even plans for the profession of real estate, and as the founder of English medium schools for the poor children of Bangalore. He is now not a Half-baked Indian but a White tiger, who stealthily makes his way to bounce on its prey and devour it without any remaining. He too ironically comments on the graduates as “fully formed fellows” (17) who are ready to take orders from others for the rest of their lives. He takes pride in being an entrepreneur and says “Entrepreneurs are made from half-baked clay” (18)

A SATIRE OR A SURREALISM:

Adiga is criticized for hurting the Nation’s pride by exposing the poverty and injustice on the global platform and receiving the Booker Prize for it. He has dipped his pen in the ink that contains irony, paradox, and satires as ingredients for upholding his hero’s pride. He is questioned “Whether India be on the road of global harmony and peace? after this novel. But the same is not recorded for Mulk Raj Anand or Rajarao for their writings. What Adiga portrays is the reality and a solution for it is derived from Hindu beliefs where God takes Avatar to destroy evil and rejuvenate morality after destruction. Adiga presents a surrealistic image of the current problems of India and comes out with a solution that will threaten the cruel landlords and politicians who pollute and plunder the nation’s human wealth by their toxic deeds.



He also portrays his hero as an ordinary but smart-thinking person who never mourns or complains about his position instead becomes triggered and bursts out for his ill-treatment beneath the level of any human being. Adiga beautifully portrays a novel of surrealism, where the hero emerges as a glorifying man after all his failures. Really Adiga paves a new path for the younger generation to march with spirit and courage to defeat obstacles and achieve success in life and in gaining opportunities for everyone on this earth as Balram Halwai in his novel correctly utters

“you are looking for the key for years but the door was always open”!(17)

Reference book:

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