

## I. Subaltern's Experience of 'Otherness'

This project studies Aravind Adiga's debut novel, *The White Tiger* published in 2008 which won the Man Booker Prize the same year. The novel is presented as a series of letters written over a period of seven nights. The protagonist Balram Halwai writes to the Premier of China, Wen Jiabao who is supposed to visit Bangalore city in a week's time. In the letters, Balram describes the marginalized experience of poor people suppressed by the mainstream society. By categorizing the single India into two parts; 'Light' and 'Darkness,' he brings back the influence of 'Orientalism' to define as 'other' and exercise power over the subaltern people by the people in authority.

Adiga provides a picture of contemporary India divided into two socio-economic classes and their disparities similar like the colonizer and colonized of Nineteenth century India. Though India has been decolonized since 1947 AD, the post-colonial Indian society is still practicing the myth of Western superiority and Indian inferiority. This condition has been portrayed at the hegemonic level in case of the illiterate poor people whereas half-educated people like Balram are conscious about it, so ultimately he goes for resistance of such discrimination and servitude at the individual level. Thus Balram's story passes through several phases resulting into an outlet to the traditional Indian society plagued through Anglophile by emancipating it from the stereotypical system of 'othering' by the Indian people themselves having authority over the rest of the subaltern people.

However, a discursive analysis of *The White Tiger* offers a message of resistance to the representation of poor Indian people discriminated as 'negative-others' by the rich and advanced Indian people themselves supposing themselves as

the 'positive-self.' About the post-imperial resistance, Edward W. Said puts his concept like:

It is more – rewarding – and more difficult – to think concretely and sympathetically, contrapuntally, about others than only about 'us.' But this also means not trying to classify them or put them in hierarchies, above all, not constantly reiterating how 'our' culture or country is number one (or not number *one* for that matter). For the intellectual there is quite enough of value to do without *that*. (98)

The statement above makes it clear that the imperialistic experience provides one to assume the binarisms but rupturing them through resistance provides the ground for equality. Though it is difficult to practice about 'others' rather than only about oneself, the changed circumstance makes it possible as in the case of Balram in *The White Tiger*. After being an entrepreneur, Balram alters the stereotypical ideology of 'othering' the working class people by treating them at their own position. Unlike him, in previous condition, when he himself was a driver, he had been suppressed like a full time servant by his masters.

*The White Tiger's* major characters like Ashok, Pinky and The Stork coincide with each other in exercising power over the marginalized people whereas Balram represents to the subaltern hero destined to be suppressed by his masters. The rich and educated characters of this novel represent to the European substitute desperate to rule the exotic, barbaric, uncivilized and backward Indian village and its people. The illiterate characters in the novel are hegemonized to get dominated by the characters in authority. But the protagonist, Balram rises to reverse the overall system of exploitation being in practice on the basis of Oriental myths. Thus Adiga signifies the urgent need of transformation in the social, economic, political system of

contemporary India where the Indian people themselves are characterized as Westerners represented by the educated Indian people to dominate the Easterners represented by the uneducated Indians.

The protagonist of *The White Tiger*, Balram writes the letter to the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao about his own story. He begins story from his childhood days in Laxmangarh, a small village in the district of Gaya. He names his hometown as the 'Darkness' as it represents an impoverished, rural region plagued with slavery, illiteracy, poverty and suppression. He belongs to a poor Halwai family whose destiny was to make sweets according to the hierarchical division of caste system in India. His father is a rikshaw-puller who makes little money to contribute for his family. Adiga mentions about four landlords in Balram's village who live in their facilitated mansions outside the village. Those landlords have been named after the names of animals appropriate for their characteristics: The Raven, The Stork, The Buffalo and The Wild Boar. These people possess all of the cultivated land, mines and fisheries of the village.

When Balram is at school, during a surprise inspection, a school inspector praises him as a 'white tiger' impressed by his exceptional intelligence. Due to the poverty, to pay off the debt of his family, he is forced to drop out of school and work in a teashop along with his elder brother Kishan. He does not feel comfortable working at the teashop because he perceives this job is just like 'human-spiders'. Rather he is attracted to the job of a driver and convinces his family to pay for driving classes. Though it is challenging to go against the will of his grandmother, Kusum, he gets permission as he agrees to send his salary home every month. He is employed as a driver for the Stork's family who live in Dhanabad. Balram drives a Honda city car for Ashok Sharma, the younger son of the Stork who has just returned from America

after completing his study there. Ashok goes to New Delhi in order to represent the business interest of his family along with his wife Pinky. Pinky is another major character in *The White Tiger* who has adopted American lifestyle as a whole. Throughout his driving career to their masters, Balram is not only humiliated for his 'half-baked ideas' but also is exploited for his inferiority. Being paid only for the post of a driver, he is a full-time servant to his masters from day to night.

Balram decides to have a better life for himself unlike other fellow drivers of his generation. So, he stops sending money home, vowing to rise above life as a servant and never return to the 'Darkness.' He begins to mimic Mr. Ashok's clothes and habits, by entering into the Malls in Delhi where only the upper class people used to visit. One night after many hours of drinking and partying, Pinky orders Balram to let her drive. But unfortunately, she runs over something in the road – which turns out to be a child later on. The next day of the road accident, The Stork arrives and forces Balram to sign a confession of the accident done by his daughter in law. Although no report is ever filed for the road accident resulting on the death of a child, Balram realizes that his employers are only looking out for their best interests at the rate of their driver's life. Pinky and Ashok's marital relationship suffers from a crisis as she wants to return back to America assuming India is not suitable place to live for the civilized people like her. But Ashok rejects her idea seeing better opportunities only in India in near future more than in America itself. He clearly puts out his attitude towards India in a quite positive way as it not only has changed drastically by having the American lifestyle inside India but also he can possess the servants to do everything for him by being paid as a driver only.

When Mr. Ashok begins giving bribes for his family business, Balram starts to overcharge Ashok for petrol and car repairs. Balram even starts planning of

murdering his master Ashok. Though he is well aware about the consequence of his master's murder would result on the punishment and even death of all of his family members. Eventually Balram kills Ashok stabbing him with a broken bottle at the road and he takes out the bag full of money from the car and escapes from there. He flees to Bangalore and starts his own business owing a company of taxis named, 'White Tiger Drivers.' He even changes his name to 'Ashok Sharma,' and becomes master of his own will. By bribing the police, he is able to achieve favour and make his business successful. One of his drivers meets a fatal road accident killing a man on cycle. Balram becomes successful to cover-up his driver through his influence to the police authorities. He considers himself as self-made successful entrepreneur that represents the future of India. He also makes a prediction about future India that is free from colonial psyche and heading towards Globalized International market hand-in-hand with Chinese superpower.

The objective of this study is to analyze the class discrimination in post-colonial India on the basis of Orientalist perspective while treating to the lower class Indians by the upper class Indians themselves. Ashok represents to a new kind of 'colonizer' who is desperate to 'rule' Indian people perceiving the marginalized people as 'others.' On the contrary, Balram stands first as the 'colonized' when he is in servitude to Ashok. Later on, after becoming an entrepreneur, he gets into authority of owning his own business. But he does not exercise power over his drivers to suppress them. Thus Balram ruptures the Neo-Orientalist discourse propagated by his predecessors by suggesting the future of India with new ideology; Sino-Indian co-operation towards the Globalized market.

Adiga asserts the bitter reality of India as divided into two opposing categories; 'Light' and 'Darkness' even in the post-modern era of Globalization. *The*

*White Tiger* as its title symbolically suggests to the power, identity and individuality, Balram stands for this title by subverting the system of domination in India. It spins the journey and transformation of Balram from living in a small village of Laxmangarh under pervasive poverty representing the lives in 'Darkness' of India and consequently moving to the 'Light,' Delhi and ultimately to Bangalore. The discursive strategic analysis of the language of the novel provides an insight to the discourse of 'otherness' by separating to the poor people with negative stereotypical representation by the people in authority. Many critics have studied this novel through various perspectives. Indian critic Akash Kapur highlights Adiga's structure of the novel as "a penetrating piece of social piece of social commentary attuned to the inequalities that persist despite, India's new prosperity" (276). So he focuses on the idea that the existence of the poor people in the novel is portrayed in the subordinate condition of rich people. The rich people are dominating to shape and control the lives of the poor people. Thus he attempts to study the inequalities in the socio-economic structure of Indian people in the contemporary period when India is claiming to have prosperity over economy and technological advancement.

A.J. Sebastian perceives the novel as deploying the theme of master-slave relationship. He addresses to Balram's conscience as the more he was being suppressed by his masters, the more he was being aggressive. He throws light on the aspect of the driver's gathering at the parking area beside the Malls in Delhi, and reading the magazines like *Murder Weekly*, plays a vital role to shape Balram as a murderer of his own master. He writes:

His schooling in crime begins with the reading of *Murder Weekly* as all drivers do, to while away their time. He feels degraded as a human

being, deprived of basic human rights to enter a shopping mall. A poor driver couldn't enter a mall as he belonged to the poor class. (232)

He points on the very activities of Balram indicating the future revenge. The reading of such magazine has already signified his proceeding towards the resistance of class discrimination by murdering Ashok. This scene describes how gradually Balram conceptualizes plan of murder of his master to escape from the barriers caused by class discrimination. This sharp contrast between the two classes in the novel has attracted many critics to study *The White Tiger* through Marxist perspective. Among a vast number of critics, Nakul Krishna studies about Adiga's quest for a new India where there is emancipation of all of the suppressed classes' people. To put his idea in his words:

Adiga's narrator quotes with approval the Urdu poet Iqbal, who said: "They remain slaves because they can't see what is beautiful in this world." Perhaps that line and the novel, serve as a manifest for the sort of writing that the new India needs but isn't getting enough of. (59)

Interestingly, he too, believes that the novelist points out the urgent need of revolution to alter the discriminatory system in India. That is why by holding the demand of the society onto his mind, Adiga has commissioned a novel in which representation of subaltern and their resistance for their identity and status is presented as their struggle aspiring to be from periphery to centre.

The issue of rise of a subaltern in *The White Tiger* has been focused by critics like Sankha Maji. He views the resistance of Balram as a result of the exercise of power and injustice. Maji expresses this issue in his words below:

The underprivileged section of this country has been relegated to the fringes. They are exposed to the various forms of exploitation by

myriad forms of hegemonic forces. But unfortunately they are either not aware of that or if aware not dare to rise in protest against it. Adiga deftly sketches the realities of the city of Delhi and its impact on the growth of Balram's mental development. In India's capital the horizon of his mind broadens. He comes in contact with his fellow drivers and his reading of popular crime fictions spark ideas in his brain. He urge to escape from the claustrophobic existence becomes more acute. He hatches plans to get out of his hellish predicament. (352)

The above extract traces the transformation of a poor Balram's character to an entrepreneur at Bangalore. Though he has not completed the formal education even at school level, his experiences teach him to grow his conscience level. Balram's each and every activity in Delhi is important to broaden the horizon of his mental development. Even the reading of a magazine shared by one of the drivers at parking spot, implies the remarkable influence upon his psychology. His journey from a poor village boy to a reputed businessman has never been smooth but a difficult struggle to get emancipation from the clutches of class system. In this way, Maji analyses the characteristic of Balram through subaltern's perspective.

Adiga's use of metaphorical language is one of the prominent area for the study of *The White Tiger*. He uses various metaphors to depict the characteristic and their condition very aptly throughout the narration. Among those metaphors, the metaphors of animals along with the title of the novel, 'the white tiger' are the best metaphors. Dr. Archana Kumari explains:

The representation of Balram's status in the beginning of the novel is like subaltern destitute. However, at the end of the novel we find him holding the position, which was ideologically and socially restricted



for him. He achieved this higher status through manipulation, murder and acquisition of wealth. The metamorphosis in the life of the protagonist of the novel from Munna – Balram Halwai – White Tiger – Ashok Sharma clearly presents the degradation of humanity as a compulsory trait of modernization. The novel is a remarkable study of politico-socio and cultural life of India. The metaphors like ‘the white tiger’, ‘the darkness’, ‘the black fort’, ‘the chandelier’, ‘the rooster coop’ etc highlights the extreme reality of India. In fact, The White Tiger is a metaphor of contemporary Indian reality with all its colours. (110)

The above citation brings the concept of how Adiga has portrayed the cultural, social and political issues in India through the use of the metaphors in the novel. The transformation of the character of the protagonist Balram Halwai is denoted through multiple names in the novel which suggests to the identity crisis of modern man. Blaram’s identity from a subaltern man to the powerful businessman suffers from committing crimes. This is the indication of moral scarcity found in the contemporary India. Thus Adiga presents the bitter reality of the Indian society through the use of biting metaphors in the novel.

The publication of *The White Tiger* in this way has invited critics throughout the globe from multiple perspectives. Many critics have studied the subaltern’s destitute to alter the discourse of power whereas other critics have analyzed this novel through Marxist perspective. But very few attempts have been made to deal with the discourse of ‘otherness’ propagating the ideology of stereotypical representation. It is in this respect my dissertation will focus on dealing these issues to manifest the

subaltern's experience as discriminated 'other' propagated by the Indians themselves to exercise authority over the marginalized people.

The present research is an attempt to analyze the discourse of power in relation to ideology of representation propagated by Stuart Hall. He introduces this theory to study the socio-cultural power relation in the text. According to Hall, the texts use "representational practice known as 'stereotyping'" to deliver the intended meaning. Such 'stereotyping' characteristic represents to the particular community on the basis of "cultural belongingness" at the same time, it separates that community by showing the "difference" (Hall 230). By showing the culture of others as different from one's culture, it also provides a "negative image to the others" and on the contrary, assumes one's culture as "positive" (Hall 225-226). Such practicing of representing the 'other' as negative, brings back the influence of Saidian Orientalism. The Orientalist discourse of power to define, understand and have authority over the Non-Westerners by the Westerners has similarity with the ideology of 'othering.' In *The White Tiger*, the India and its people have been divided into two categories to highlight the issue of class discrimination affecting the whole system of political, social and cultural aspect of the society. While doing so, the project attempts to show how the Western educated characters are implementing the colonial ethos on the local people. The project furthermore analyses the language in the novel used by the characters in authority to dominate the rest of the people. Furthermore, this research brings the reference of post-colonial critics like Edward W. Said and Homi K. Bhabha along with others. Since, the dissertation follows the critical stylistics technique to study the use of language in the text, it will use the linguistic techniques pioneered by Sara Mills and Stuart Hall. The second chapter analyzes the discrimination in language to 'other' the subaltern characters of *The White Tiger* at the level of words

and sentences. Similarly, the third chapter deals with the discourse of 'othering' the India as a whole. Eventually, the fourth chapter concludes the entire idea of the dissertation.

## II. Ideology of 'Othering' the Subalterns

The ideology of 'otherness' is used by critics to highlight how social identities are contested. Stuart Hall argues that in dichotomies crucial for the practice and the vision of social order the differentiating power hides as a rule behind one of the members of the opposition. He asserts:

Representation is a complex business, and especially when dealing with 'difference', it engages feelings, attitudes and emotions and it mobilizes fears and anxieties in the viewer, at deeper levels than we can explain in a simple, common-sense way. (226)

He suggests developing critical concept to explain about how the representation signifies to a particular group of characters in the text for the social science research. Through the representations of two classes of characters, In *The White Tiger*, Adiga comments about the influence of the 'West' on the third world countries like India. The 'West' is the judge and jury of every aspect of Indian behavior spreading the concept that 'Americanization' is a part of civilization. Throughout the novel, English language has been represented not only as the language of 'masters' in India, also to dominate the 'servants'. So, the novel focuses on the issue of the 'othering' of the subalterns represented by the characters from 'darkness.' At the center of the narrative of *The White Tiger*, the protagonist Balram represents to the subaltern whereas Mr. Ashok represents to the superior rich class people having authority over them. This economic disparity has affected the overall socio-cultural division in Indian society. The rich people discriminate the poor as the negative 'other' on the basis of their backwardness and assume to themselves as the positive 'self'.

## Ideology of Discrimination: An Analysis at the Level of Words

This chapter will be oriented towards the issue of 'Otherness' at the level of the individual words in isolation, used in the novel, *The White Tiger*. Such word analysis will be helpful for observing to the implied meaning by their specific use to enforce the ideology of discrimination; the projection of 'positive self' and 'negative others.' Such dichotomies of 'self' and 'otherness' are set up as being natural and so often times in everyday life they are taken for granted and presumed to be natural. But they represent an established social order of hierarchy where certain groups are established as being superior to other groups. This kind of superiority functions as 'othering' by regarding them as an inferior to oneself. Said relates this issue with the Foucauldian discourse of power to perpetuate a particular view of 'East' through the perspective of 'West' by discriminating the former showing them inferior from every aspect. Edward W. Said defines Orientalism as "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the orient' and (most of the time) 'the occident'" (25). He studies the cultural representations of the 'orient' and the 'occident' are distinct on two manners. The ontological variation suggests to the cultural difference between the two different geographical areas as it is whereas epistemological difference is purely concerned with the personal concern to investigate the ways that lead a certain perspective. In this regard, Said focuses on the point that 'most of the time' the 'occident' is having power over the 'orient'. He asserts, "Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the 'orient'" (25). Thus the 'West', being powerful than the 'East', during the period of colonization, created the myths about 'orient' as vast, exotic, mysterious, uncivilized, barbaric etc to dominate them and rule over them. They tried to restructure the creation myth and possess the authority over them. So far as the

postcolonial period is concerned, as in *The White Tiger*, there is not any direct influence of imposing power by the West to the Indian, this novel portrays two socio-economic classes within India where upper class people suppress the Indian lower class people on the basis of superiority. There are few characters that are eager to rule the rest of the people assuming themselves as superior to the rest. The novel provides a contemporary picture of India and its people in the era of globalization.

In *The White Tiger*, the concept of 'Westernization' has been adopted by its characters at the level of 'Americanization'. In this circumstance, the ideology of Orientalism performs in a distinct way, as the 'Americanized' characters like Ashok and his wife Pinky conceptualize and treat with India and its people exactly like the 'Orientalists'. They not only treat those vast numbers of poor and illiterate people as 'negative others,' also become able to stand at the position of ruler just assuming themselves superior over them. Balram is called by the words like, 'filthy,' 'disgusting,' 'Mr Maharaja,' 'stupid' and 'driver' instead of using his own name by his masters. These types of marked adjectives along with Pinky ironically addressing 'Mr Maharaja,' to her driver makes him different from his masters. Along with the class distinction, Adiga has created the people having physical distinctions, too. Though Balram and Ashok were born at the same village, one may "wonder: how could two such contrasting specimens of humanity be produced by the same soil, sunlight, and water" (80)? Adiga not only creates class distinction, but also physical distinction, too among the Indian people. Thus he creates two types of countries in one, as well as two kinds of people within India. This chapter will study how individual words alone support the ideology of discrimination between the upper class people and lower class people in the novel.

In *The White Tiger*, Adiga uses so many words to formulate the discrimination between rich and poor people of India. There are tremendous amounts of words in the narration of Balram that help to promote for the exploitation of poor people from the rich people by creating binaries. To foreground this discrimination, Adiga separates India into two parts as 'Light' and 'Darkness'. The word light is always associated with the positivity, knowledge, power and fairness, too. Just like the 'Orientalists' suppose themselves belonging to the land of Enlightenment, here in the novel, Ashok and Pinky follow the same norm of belonging to the 'Light'. On the contrary, 'Darkness' stands for quite negative connotations like ignorance, illiteracy, powerlessness and blackness, too. The illiterate village people have been represented as belonging to this area of 'Darkness' by Adiga. Thus these two binary words have been used by the writer to separate a single country into two parts; representing knowledge by light and on the contrary, ignorance by darkness.

In the novel, Balram writes to the Premier of China, about India which "is two countries in one; an India of Light, and an India of Darkness" (14). The places which are situated around the Indian Ocean have been turned into metropolitan cities. Mumbai and Bangalore are the cities which are heading towards the international entrepreneurship with the globalized concept. Delhi, though it is not close to the ocean, is the capital city of India. It has two parts; on the one hand, there are big and expensive malls, restaurants of American standard, huge apartment blocks with enormous facilities that give the influence of American lifestyle in India. On the other hand, there are slum settlements, too. Balram describes quite negatively to 'Darkness.' He adds, "But the river brings darkness to India – the black river" (14). So, river has been followed by the adjective 'black' to show the negative attitude towards it. This type of negative expression to the river as black arouses a bad concept

for that place. Though the river is called Mother Ganga, the most sacred river according to Hindu mythology, the lands connected to this river have been portrayed as 'Darkness' in the novel. Beside the quality of being fertile, the lands of 'Darkness' consists the maximum poverty and illiteracy. This division reinforces the biased lens used by the mainstream society.

According to the ethics of Orientalism, language is the vehicle for exploring the world. Balram in his narration, uses the word 'chauffeur' to refer to driver. Cambridge dictionary defines this term as "someone whose job is to drive a car for a rich or important person" (n.pag.). Balram's ambition to become a chauffeur is influenced by the argument, "our thought-systems are influenced by the language of our community, so that our idea of 'reality is constrained by the linguistic forms available to us as members of that community" (Mills 63). Thus Balram's perception about his ideal career is not to become a general driver, but to be a typical chauffeur who drives luxurious cars for the rich people. His thought system works on the periphery of working for the rich people. On the contrary, the people in the light perceive the idea that they cannot survive in the darkness. In *The White Tiger*, Pinky gets angry with her husband for visiting the village of Laxamngarh, where he and Balram were born. She expresses her anger with the remark like, "Why are we going to this place in the middle of nowhere, Ashoky" (80)? She dislikes the village, the darkness so her attitude towards the place is also negative. She does not feel close to India, so she insists her husband Ashok to return back to America as she starts feeling suffocated to live in India anymore. But Ashok consoles her that the situation has changed in India in comparison to the past. He perceives that he can live in India just because he can enjoy American lifestyle even living in India. He is positive towards India at the condition that it is going to be better than America itself in near future



because he sees Light in India. He shows his attitude towards poor people even if they hire them for any post like gatekeeper, driver, they are treated as the full time servants. So he feels happy to be master of such slaves who are present there all the time to fulfill their duty of servitude. This fact also is the attraction for Ashok to decide to stay at India. He is positive to the life of his class because they have servants to take care of them. This perspective gives birth to the notion of 'positive self' and 'negative other.'

Through the dialogues of Ashok and Pinky, Adiga highlights their consent to rule their servants who are 'inferior' to them. They use ridiculous words and mock to Balram after judging him as a 'half-baked fellow'. Since, Balram had to leave school because of poverty, he remained half-literate. Here, a person has been addressed as a thing, an object like bread. Half-cooked bread neither completely falls in the category of raw for nor well-cooked, so it is useless too. This analogy gives a negative judgment to the character of Balram in the novel. He is supposed as a stupid 'yokel' who should not be carried to Delhi with Ashok and Pinky. She negatively remarks illiterate people as being stupid, too. She possesses power over redefining the character of poor and illiterate people. Use of such negative words enhances the fact that how the people in power interpret the concept of what is good and bad in their own way. She judges Balram as he is inferior to them in every aspect like his dress-up, knowledge, mannerisms etc. She further shouts at him as being 'filthy' for not keeping himself clean, not following the good manner as he is seen 'scratching the groin' part. She makes him out from her kitchen as she sees him 'dirty' with the red paan all over his teeth and even dropped in his shirt, too. She uses the word, 'useless' for Balram not knowing to play the badminton with her. Though he was appointed for the post of a driver and he drives the car well, he is supposed to do everything for his

masters. If he is unable to perform any other task except driving, too, he is scolded by the masters. Along with Pinky, Ashok too teaches Balram how to pronounce correctly some English words like 'mall.' But being a half-educated fellow, Balram fails to pronounce this word correctly. He pronounces it as 'maal,' 'mool,' 'mowll' and 'malla,' as a result, he is humiliated by them. Similarly, Balram also can't speak out the word 'Pizza' and he is supposed as stupid by birth as a result, they leave their effort to teach him English. By showing their driver inferior from each aspect, the rich people are portrayed as assuming themselves like the Western imperialists.

Adiga presents the visuals of rich city contrasting with the poor village in *The White Tiger*. The city has been projected as the only place where educated people can survive whereas village is like a hell for them. He introduces a small village, Laxmangarh, situated at the bank of sacred river Ganga. The river has been polluted by the dirty activities of the rich landlords of that village. This place stands for the vast, fertile and exotic land consisting at least one third land of the whole country with the ponds on the middle where water buffaloes are seen dipping and eating lotuses and lilies. Balram points out at the evil side of such village with the use of word 'paradise' in a very satirical tone. Though the village is like a piece of heaven, with beauty, lush and productivity, it has been turned into corrupted land because of the activities of the landlords. The landlords eat all the money projected for the development of the village by government but they do not pay attention to it in anyway. The schoolteacher also takes all the books, meal provided to the poor students and sells them for money in the market. The doctors who are appointed at government hospitals, do not visit hospitals and cure poor people, rather they work at their own private clinics only. Thus everyone in power and possession is misusing it for their own personal benefit. As a result, the electricity poles are 'defunct,' water tap

are in broken condition, there is the smelling of 'sewage' everywhere. This word defunct shows the disparity between the residences of rich people which is full of facilities in contrast with the village where there is no electricity. So this word highlights the life in darkness, the poor people are bound to live in dark because the people in power do not pay attention there. The 'smell of sewage' is such a terrible to bear in reality, but the people in village are habituated to it since the people from government keep it so neglecting the repair. Thus the people have been treated just like the animals are treated by human beings.

In his village, a water buffalo is given more attention than the children of that house, it is fed well no matter the people have anything good to eat or not, the poor people are thin whereas it is fat. So Balaram personifies the 'water buffalo' by addressing it with the pronoun 'she' while describing about such condition in each family of his village. On the contrary, human beings are treated as non-humans as they sleep together in a small room one falling over the other just like a 'creature, millipede.' This kind of portrayal of two opposite kinds of places and people inside the single country has created an effect of alienation of the poor people and village as 'different' from the rich cities and rich people. The village life has been treated as 'other' in a negative manner. This distinction has been further described explicitly by Adiga as he presents two kinds of people on the basis of their physical appearance, too.

Adiga categorizes further to this class division of rich and poor on their physical basis, too referring them as 'big bellies' to the rich people and 'small bellies' to the poor people. In his country, people can be recognized whether s/he is poor or rich simply through their appetite alone. The children of poor people are 'too lean' and 'short' with 'oversized head' because of under-nourishment. The elder people

also are 'lean and thin,' 'topless,' their body 'blackened' with direct sunlight and look overage, too. Balam's mother and father die because of tuberculosis which is caused by malnutrition. When his father is taken to hospital, there is no doctor. So, poor people like him do not even get proper cure and medication at hospital, too because the doctors are also corrupted. So the lack of sufficient nutritional food, over burden of hardworking, the condition of hospitals having no doctors, etc are the major reasons behind such untimely death of people with 'small bellies'. The narrator then introduces with the four landlords of his village who represent the people with 'big bellies.' He chooses their names after the names of animals and birds very aptly which are sufficient to imply their characteristics, too. The four of them are the 'Buffalo', the 'Stork', the 'Wild Boar' and 'Raven'. The Buffalo has been named after his appetite. He is 'bald, brown and dimpled headed' who often carries a shotgun with him. He possesses the right over roads and takes money from buses and rickshaw which travel through that road. Similarly, the Stork is also a fat man named after a bird specific for his 'fat moustache, thick and curved and pointy at the tips.' He is the owner of the 'river' that flows outside the village. He owns fishes caught through that river by fisherman and raises toll from 'every boatman' who crosses to river to come to that village. His brother 'Wild Boar' owns all of the fertile land of that village. To get permission to work on his fields, poor people have to 'bow down to his feet' and touch the dust under his slippers and agree to his conditions. He is also fond of women. Finally the fourth one is the 'Raven' who possesses the infertile land around the hillside, takes money from the 'goatherds' who go to graze their goats. All of these four 'masters' live within 'high-walled mansions', outside from Laxmangarh. They have built their own 'temples', their own 'wells' and ponds for themselves. Four of them have sent their children to cities like Dhanbad and Delhi. Thus there is a vast

difference between the people with big bellies and people with small bellies on the basis of size, too. The rich people staying at the luxurious town, own all of the resources of village whereas the poor people work till death on that village without being fed properly. Balaram also feels the difference in their bodies. The body of rich man is so soft and white like a 'premium cotton pillow' just contrasting with the body of poor man as hard as a 'knotted rope'. Adiga also discriminates with the similes they are compared with. He has paid attention to each and every word used to refer for two kinds of people in India. The premium cotton pillow refers to the softness which is made for the comfort to human beings. Cotton is not only soft and white but also looks puffed, so this comparison makes the idea explicit to the body of rich people. On contrast of this simile, the knotted rope has been used to describe the toughness, hardness, thinness of human body in case of the poor people. Adiga becomes able to discriminate the rich and poor people by portraying their physical structure, too. The inter-relationship between the people of these classes is also full of vast difference like their bodies.

The discrimination has been further highlighted by Adiga by using the word 'sidekick' to describe the character of Balram. This word refers to a helper of a person in power who is inferior to the person. This prejudiced negative connotation is used by the schoolteacher while providing a name to Balram for the first time. The schoolteacher gives name to Balram after the name of mythical character from Mahabharata as the brother of Lord Krishna. As in the mythology, Krishna possesses all the virtues and power so he is still worshipped by Hindu people whereas Balram is only supporter to Krishna. Following the same reference, the teacher whose name is Krishna, gives his student the name Balram, suggesting as his 'sidekick.' This word having negative influence reinforces the discrimination between the powerful and

powerless in the society. In the village, the schoolteacher, too like other landlords exercises power for his own benefit by taking out the money provided by the government to feed lunch for the poor students. Thus the people in power legitimize the suppression to the poor people on the basis of discrimination.

Though Balram works as the post of a driver to the Stork's family, the treatment to him is beyond from employer-employee relationship. They assume themselves as masters and servant to their drivers. That's why Balram and Ram Persad have to work there as a full time servant though they are paid for driving only. Their master's treatment to them is also non-human supposing them as if they do not have mind, intellect, feelings, emotions and they are just the robots who can only perform according to their master's order. Balram explains himself sometimes 'swiping the meadow', sometimes 'wiping his feet into warm water', sometimes 'cooking meal for them', sometimes 'washing dishes', 'serving alcohol' etc. He also has to play badminton with Pinky madam. And once a man at Delhi whom Ashok has some political dealing, makes Balram pour and serve drink for them with one hand during driving a car. This kind of behavior to suppress the servant becomes clearer when Pinky hits a child to death while driving car being drunk. They call Balram to sign the commitment letter of that accident which he had not done. They even do not talk with him properly supposing that he does not understand such things because he is uneducated. So, the servants in India are just objects to be possessed who can be manipulated according to their master's wishes. This fact is also working on the level of 'trustworthiness' to their servants by their masters. Adiga connects this very idea of believing to one's servant with generalizing his attitude as the 'basis of Indian economy' because the masters sit in the car with bag full of money. They even send

such bags with money with the drivers only but never suspect their drivers running with that money. So in every aspect their 'loyal servants' are different from them.

The socio-cultural values among these two classes of people are also distinct from each other. Adiga makes a statement that things are 'different in darkness and light' depicting through the characterization of Balram and Ashok. Ashok has married a Christian lady, Pinky even though his father and brother were against this marriage. Ashok has the freedom to decide about his personal life even if sometimes going against the family's will. On the contrary, the poor people are so intimate and close to their families and family values that they cannot go against their elder's wishes. So, Adiga uses deliberately the word 'hitched-off' to refer to the marriage of Balram's brother Kishan. This word creates a kind of negative sense that somebody is using force to make another person do one's task. And the second person is refusing to do so, in this condition, the first person hitches-off the second person using a physical force by pulling him by his neck. Here, this word has been used to refer Kishan's marriage which was against his will and forcefully arranged by his grandmother. Without any question, he marries to a girl whom his granny chooses and orders to. Kishan is not given any freedom to decide whether he is ready to get married at the moment or he does not like the girl, he gets married anyway. Similarly, when both of the brothers are working on the tea-shop to make money to pay the debt of their sister's marriage, Balram talks to Kishan that he wants to leave the job. But Kishan advises to Balram that they have to work there anyway because their granny has ordered them to 'stick-on' to that work. Again this very word 'stick-on' arouses negative sense that they are forced to obey her at any rate. In reality, they are dissatisfied with their working on there but they are bound to do so. While describing about the daily monotonous and frustrating job of those workers, Balram uses

pronoun 'that' for those people. So such use of pronoun to refer to human beings in terms of using 'they' implies the sense that those workers are not treated like human beings. In this way, family pressure counts as most important rather than a person's individual desire in low class families. But high-class families have the individual liberty to do according to one's own will.

In this way, the people and places belonging to rich people have been described with normal use of words in *The White Tiger* by Arvind Adiga. So in many cases those words create the positive meaning to denote such people. For example, the word 'light' has been used to suggest the positive lifestyle of the rich people. On the other side, there are many words carefully chosen by the writer to refer the poor people of India as inferior by birth. Their activities are described like the words, 'human spiders,' 'yokel,' 'sidekick,' 'half-baked' etc. The different use of language while dealing with two different socio-economic classes within India has referred to the ideology of discrimination. Just like the Orientalists described 'East' as different from 'West,' this text in the same manner points out to the village as 'different' from 'city.' Not only the place is different from one another, the people, too are depicted as the rich city dweller are 'superior' and poor people of village are 'inferior.' Thus the so-called Western educated people have been 'othered' the rest of the people by showing them different from themselves. To justify this ideology of 'otherness,' Adiga uses discriminating words to suggest the representation of 'positive-self' and 'negative other.'

#### Ideology of Naming and Describing: An Analysis at the Level of Phrases and Sentences

This chapter is an analysis of language use at the level of phrases and sentences in *The White Tiger*, used by the writer to highlight the ideology of 'Otherness.' This issue has been highlighted further by the use of phrases, inferences



and the metaphors by Adiga, so while analyzing the novel, if “we concentrate on words in isolation, it can sometimes appear that we have a particular view of meaning, i.e. that meaning is located within that word” (Mills 98). The analysis of words in isolation may create ambiguous understanding of the text whereas analysis at the level of sentence provides a context to the meaning. This technique observes how the writer uses such phrases and sentences deliberately to project the meaning in the text. In the novel, Adiga has used a vast number of phrases to convey the message of suppression and domination prevalent in contemporary India. In the post-colonial India, the Indian people themselves have adopted such ideology of discrimination by covering themselves with the mask of Americanization. To unveil such a hegemonic system of exploitation, he focuses on the concept adopted by the two classes differently. The rich people who have studied in America and they are ready to rule the uneducated poor people. In his letter to the Chinese Premier, Balram writes, “My ex-employer the late Mr Ashok’s ex-wife, Pinky Madam, taught me one of these things; and at 11:32 PM today, which was about ten minutes ago, when the lady on All India Radio announced, ‘Premier Jiabao is coming to Bangalore next week’, I said that thing at once” (3). The verb phrase ‘taught me one of these things’ presupposes the Oriental ideology that Pinky madam possesses the quality of teaching English to the uneducated backward people like Balram. Lesley Jeffries opines that choice of the word in naming has ideological potential in the language use of the text. This means, “the choice of a word with pejorative or ameliorative connotations” (Jeffries 20). In simple term, when a choice of word refers to something, it is denoting to the writer’s opinion of that referent, at the same time. On the basis of this perspective, this word choice, ‘taught’ used by Adiga naturalizes the idea that Balram learns English through his Westernized madam. This sentence indicates the concept of ‘manifest destiny’ to

highlight the issue how the Orientals are eager to teach civilization to the Occidents. Pinky has been portrayed as Anglophilic character in the novel. Supposing herself superior to the people from darkness, she tries to impose power over them. Though Pinky and Ashok's characters can be taken as the part of globalization since the novel sets its time in the post-colonial India, their consent to dominate, suppress and exploit to their servants rather provide a space for their characters being like colonizers.

The condition of such relationship can be found being more hegemonic when Balram starts working for Ashok as a driver. So, he learns many things from them in the course of his driving. Even the sarcastic remark like '*What a fucking joke*' is learnt by Balram through Pinky Madam. In this phrase, the noun 'joke' has been modified by the premodifier adjective so the focus is on the word 'fucking,' rather than the noun. She often expresses this American profanity to ridicule the India and Indian system overall. The reason behind using such dirty phrase which is most common in spoken English by her depicts her characters more closely. Since she has adopted the Western value completely, there is also an impression of mimicking such dirty expressions like the Native Americans themselves. To show how extremely the character like her mimics not only the language but also the culture of the West, the writer makes a choice of this phrase. Though her origin was India, she dislikes it completely and is desperate to return back to America. She even has changed the religion to Christianity, too. He has adopted the American lifestyle as well as dress-ups so she is mistaken like "almost the same but not quite" (Bhabha 89). In the novel, Pinky has been characterized as mimicking perfectly the American language, culture, religion, dress-up, behavior as well as attitude, too.

Adiga has provided a lot of descriptions in the novel to highlight the idea how the characters like Ashok and Pinky have prioritized the attitude that they are totally

different from other people. In his narration, Balram time and again mentions about how he learned varieties of things while driving to his employers. He states, “He and Pinky Madam would seat in the back of the car, chatting about life about India, and America – mixing Hindi and English together and by eavesdropping on them, I learned a lot about life, India and America and a bit of English, too” (47). This sentence includes three clauses which can be separated as: ‘Ashok and Pinky would sit on the back seat of the car,’ ‘they would chat about life, about India, about America – mixing Hindi and English together’ and ‘by eavesdropping on them, I learned a lot about them and English, too.’ Among these clauses, the focus is on ‘I learned about life, India and America as well as English language’ from them whereas other clauses add the description to his learning process. In such a way, by repeating the same explanation again and again, Adiga focuses on the process of the passing and learning of American language and culture respectively by Ashok and Pinky to Balram. The mimicry of Americanness has been further depicted when Balram sees Pinky Madam at the first sight, he is mistaken that she is an American. He explains, “I assume at first she was an American, one of those magical things he had brought home from New York like his accent and the fruit flavoured perfume he put on his face after shaving” (76). This sentence plays on the phrase ‘one of those magical things’ assuming female as the object which can be brought from one place to another by possessing her. Balram compares her with other two things like Ashok’s English accent and perfume. The noun modifier, ‘one of the magical things’ refers to the assumption that she is unlike other women in India. Balram also explains about her activities quite uncommon to the female of his village when she was in Dhanabad. He narrates, “Except to play badminton with Ram Prasad, which she did wearing dark glasses, she never left her room. I wondered what was going on with her-was she

having a fight with her husband. Was he not sticking it to her well in bed” (72)?

Since, an uneducated Balram is narrating the whole story of *The White Tiger*, he has the control over expressing his own attitude and language in the novel. Adiga uses the characters like Balram to communicate his idea with readers because Balram belongs to the lower socio-economic background. To convey the idea of inequality among two classes, with the help of Balram’s attitude, Adiga shows how these people assume for the position of female in the family. So Balram co-relates the role of Pinky with other female of his community. The phrase ‘sticking on bed well’ presupposes the idea that a woman’s happiness lies on the physical relationship with her husband. According to him, since female does not have any other personal desire for herself, what may be the cause for her distress then? He doubts that the single reason for woman’s happiness is by getting sexual pleasure. Thus Balram conceives the idea that females are not equal to males. They are the subordinate to them.

Though Balram’s mother has been given a little space on the novel, she represents many such women in the darkness. When Balram is asked to tell his name by the schoolteacher, on the very first day of his school, he answers, ‘Munna’. Then the schoolteacher reacts that name is common which simply means a ‘boy’ in Hindi and he needs individual name of his own. He questions to Balram whether his mother has given any name. Balram replies, “She spews blood. She’s got no time to name me” (13). When readers go through this innocent yet pathetic answer of Balram, one feels emotional towards the condition of life in darkness. To describe about his mother’s illness, Balram chooses this phrase, ‘spewing blood.’ Among other multiple choices of words and phrases, this phrase has the sympathetic connotation with her inability to name her son. Her problem of ‘spewing the blood,’ referring to Tuberculosis which, is caused by the malnutrition and lack of hygiene. Furthermore,

this remark not only picturizes the idea that Balram's family is passing through severe poverty, but also they do not have awareness that she should be taken to hospital. On the contrary, when Balram's father later on, too suffers from this same disease, he is taken to the government hospital. Though there are not any doctors to treat the patients as a result he dies. At least he is taken to the hospital with the hope that he can get well again just being a male member of the family. So, in darkness, people follow the norm of gender discrimination, too along with caste discrimination.

In *The White Tiger*, the only female character, who has been displayed having and exercising power in the darkness, is Kusum. She is Balram's grandmother but as a narrator, he writes her name instead of the relation with her as 'granny'. In the course of narrating her part, he introduces her:

Kusum, my granny, was leading the procession. Sly old Kusum! She had this habit of rubbing her forearms hard when she felt happy, as if they were a piece of ginger she was grating to release grins from. Her teeth were all gone, but this only made her grin more cunning. She had grinned her way into control of the house; every son and daughter-in-law lived in fear of her. (16)

He not only mentions her name, also gives physical description of her in detail. Any kind of language form has its meaning in the text. There is always 'form and function' relationship of language use in particular ideological ways. To get this perspective in a better way, Jeffries provides reasons:

In case of naming, there may be a perfectly acceptable choice between two or more ways of referencing the same things. For example, the name of someone (e.g. *Lisa Heywood*) might alternate with another 'innocent' way of referencing the same person (e.g. *my sister*). On the

other hand, there may be a more biased view possible with a further naming practice (e.g. *the best singer in the school*). (17-18)

So, as described in the above statement, the implied meaning behind using a person's name in the text plays a great role to produce an ideology. In *The White Tiger*, Balram narrates his grandmother with her name as 'Kusum' instead of writing her as grandmother to show his dissatisfaction with her character. In addition, the metaphorical phrase 'she had grinned her way into control of the house' suggests that she owned the power and control over her family. Her characteristic as being the most powerful in her family has been further justified by the phrase, 'every son and daughter-in-law lived in fear of her'. So, by referring her through her name, though she was the elder of Balram, he shows disrespect to her. Unlike his brother Kishan who obeys all the commands and orders of her, Balram disobeys her in every aspect. When Balram asks his brother Kishan to leave the job which he doesn't like, Kishan replies, "Granny said stick to the tea-shop and we'll stick to the tea-shop" (50). Thus the verb 'stick' gives a kind of sense that though they are not willing to do that work, they must do at any cost. Being an elder member of the family, she owns the power over her family. The other women like his aunties are only described as tending the water buffaloes all the time. In his village, the water buffaloes get more attention than the human beings. The people of the family are only fed after the buffaloes are fed. So, when Balram returns to his village in the white uniform of a driver with his masters Ashok and Pinky, he is amused to get the special attention from them. He narrates, "For the first time I can remember I got more attention than the water buffalo" (84). The premodifier, 'For the first time I can remember' has been used before the clause, 'I got attention' which marks the highlight of the readers. Moreover, the postmodifier 'than the water buffalo' captures more focus in this

sentence. He is surprised to see the different behavior of his family members when he gets a well paid job of a driver. Adiga humorously compares the condition of the people and animals in the village. On the one hand, he personifies the buffalo by using the pronoun 'she' and on the other hand, he describes the life of children being treated like animals. He describes, "At night they sleep together, their legs falling one over the other, like one creature, a millipede" (21). The children have been described as sleeping like insects as they do not have enough space to sleep comfortably.

Kusum always wants to have authority over her family members and all of them obey her. But Balram goes against her will in case of his marriage, too. Kusum says to Balram that she has looked for a girl who is perfect match to him and he must get married with that girl. But he rejects her idea of getting married. At this point, she gets furious and gives command to Balram, "You'll do what we want" (85). Thus she tries to exercise power to her grandson. This short and commanding phrase implies the situation that she is strictly speaking to Balram to follow her orders and if he goes against her will, he will be punished by her. Balram's elder brother Kishan also gets married with a girl whom their granny orders. So, this picture of the darkness is quite different with the condition of marriage in light.

People in the light do not follow even the social norms and values while choosing for the bride. They do not follow the norm that one should marry within own caste and religion. Unlikely in darkness people follow these norms. Ashok, the character from light, gets married with Pinky going against the will of his family. He contrasts the marriage of rich people In comparison to the marriage of poor people. When his wife leaves him, he regrets for his marriage:

'When I was in America, I thought family was a burden, I don't deny it. When you and Father tried to stop me from marrying Pinky because

she wasn't a Hindu I was furious with you, I don't deny it. But without family, a man is nothing. Absolutely nothing. I had nothing but this driver in front of me for five nights. Now at last I have someone real by my side: you.' (189)

In the extract above, Adiga gives an explanation about marriage from the point of view of Westernized character Ashok. Since, he was in America, he was influenced through the American lifestyle and thought, so he married a Christian girl despite his family's disapproval. But when he returns to India, he falls in love with the country and the family. The phrase, 'this driver in front of me' suggests that he is talking about Balram. Though Balram is in front of Ashok, he does not spell his name. This type of word choice denotes to his detachment with the poor people in India, whom he treats as different from the rich people. But very soon after Pinky gets separated from Ashok, he seems to be attached with another girl. He brings her to his apartment and as Balram overhears their conversation, they turn out to be in relationship before Ashok marries to Pinky before going to study in America. Thus falling in love, living in relationship, marrying, doing break-up, divorce, remarriage are shown as quite normal affairs in case of Westernized character whereas these norms are very strict in the village. Balram narrates the event that the gatekeeper Ram Bahadur and another driver Ram Persad are gossiping about their masters. They are talking about Pinky's religion as Christianity and Ashok marrying her even after that. Ram Bahadur says, "They married in America. When we Indians go there, we lose all respect for caste,' the Nepali said" (76). Instead of using his name as Ram Bahadur while quoting his dialogue, Adiga writes, 'the Nepali' to the text producer. In the text, he has used the pronoun 'we Indians' and immediately, his identity as Nepali has been listed in the narration. The implication behind this play of pronoun 'we' by assimilating himself



with the other Indian people of working class like Balram, the writer has created an equal relationship among the working class people no matter what nationality they are. At the same time, his comment like that separates the poor people from rich people because people in darkness are supposed to follow their religion and culture more strictly than the rich people. After finding out the fact that if anybody from India goes to America, then one forgets about the caste and religion, the driver gets shocked to know these things. Similarly, the drivers in Delhi gossip about Ashok's divorce with Pinky in the same manner, "It's a divorce – every rich man these days is divorcing his wife. These rich people..." He shook his head. His lips curled up in scorn, exposing his reddish, rotting, *paan*-decayed canines. 'No respect for God, for marriage, family – nothing" (183). Thus the people in darkness separate them from the rich people in terms of religion, culture, lifestyle etc.

Still their ego complex has been shown between the servants by the writer. There exists a norm that an old servant tries to dominate the newer one. Balram narrates, "Servants need to abuse other servants. It's been bred into us, the way Alsatian dogs are bred to attack strangers. We attack anyone who's familiar" (130). And same thing happens with the older gatekeeper Ram Bahadur and new driver Balram, too. When Balram finishes the washing of two dogs in the Stork family, Ram Bahadur watches carefully whether Balram makes any mistakes. Balram writes, "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)! Adiga uses the phrase 'king of Nepal' to the gate keeper, Ram Bahadur calling to a servant by using such a respectful noun 'king,' creates a satire in the sentence. Here satire has been used to mock the character of Ram Bahadur because being himself a servant, he criticizes the other servant as if he assumes himself like the

master. So, Balram satirizes the role of the gatekeeper. The above mentioned extract contains another sentence, too which creates a devaluation of human being in front of an object like the chain. Ram Bahadur gives much more importance and value to the chain of the dog rather than Balram. He means to say that those chains cost more than the salary of a driver. This phrase presupposes that to own a servant is quite cheaper in India. Though this inference seems quite innocent at a level, it has a serious indication at core analysis. It implies the value of a servant to his masters which can be easily bought in the market at a very low price.

Quite similarly, Adiga conveys the message that the appearance of rest of the backward people looks like the same. When Balram kills his master Ashok, the police make a poster of his photograph along with his details, and stick it to public places like train station. In the same station, a man catches the sight of Balram and the poster of him on the wall. Balram gets scared whether that man would inform to the police. But unexpectedly, the situation goes like this:

Suddenly he put his hand on my shoulder.

‘You know who this fellow in the poster looks like?’

‘Who?’ I asked.

He grinned.

‘Me.’

I looked at his face, and at the photo.

‘It’s true,’ I said, slapping him on the back.

I *told* you: it could be the face of half the men in India. (295)

In the conversation above, the fact that a man’s first identity is face has been distorted by Adiga while explaining about the photograph of Balram. Balram not only is suspected by that man in the station, but the man thinks that photograph belongs to

him because he cannot read the caption written on that poster. Balram distorts this truth because as he claims in the narrative of *The White Tiger* that nobody was paying attention to him as the murderer wanted in the poster because the people from the darkness look like the same. That is the reason for Balram not being arrested in India though there was the poster even in the train station where he was travelling. As mentioned in the poster, his description is as follows:

ASSISTANCE SOUGHT IN SEARCH FOR MISSING MAN

General Public is hereby informed that the man in the picture namely Balram Halwai alias MUNNA son of Vikram Halwai rikshaw-puller is wanted for questioning. Age: Between 25 and 35. Complexion: Blackish. Face: Oval. Height: Five feet four inches estimated. Build: Thin, Small. (12)

The above mentioned type of character description matches with many other people from poor village background. His name Balram Halwai alias Munna is also quite common in his community. The phrase ‘son of Vikram Halwai rikshaw-puller’ also generalizes him as a backward person. According to Balram, there are many people like his father who pull the rikshaw to earn for their living. The rikshaw pullers used to park their vehicles in a line outside the tea shop, waiting for the passengers travelling through the bus. They were not allowed to sit on the plastic chairs put out for the customers at the tea shop. They used to crouch near the back, in their hunches over, squatting posture which was common to servants in every part of India. They are half-naked as they do not wear shirts on upper part of their body. By pulling rikshaw and most of the time, waiting for their passengers under the hot sun, their skin has been burned and turned out to be black. Their sitting style at the bus stop waiting for the passengers is also peculiar. Adiga uses humorous words and language

to describe the activities of the poor people whereas he uses serious language in case of Ashok's physical appearance. Balram describes, "Mr Ashok had his father's body; he was tall, and broad, and handsome, like a landlord's son should be" (76). This phrase foregrounds a standard for physical attribute to be a landlord. He should be tall, handsome, fair, broad and handsome. To be a landlord, one should own enormous property as well as should be physically perfect, too. Just like the Orientalists suppose themselves perfectly handsome over the people from Occidents, Adiga provides these virtues to Ashok to symbolize him as a Neo-Orientalist in the post-colonial era. He perpetuates the quality to redefine East i.e. India in *The White Tiger* through a biased perspective. To sum up, through the particular choice of the words for naming and describing to the people and places has contributed to the ideology of 'otherness' in the novel.

#### Presupposition and Inference for Projecting the 'Otherness'

...the meaning of phrases must be interpreted by drawing on factors other than the simple literal meaning of the words of which they consist...there are 'three aspects of the process of interpreting a speaker's/writer's intended meaning in producing discourse;' these are, first, trying to work out what the intention of the speaker/writer is; second, using general knowledge, at the level both of facts about the world and knowledge, which you assume you will be expected to know in the situation; and third, determining the inferences which need to be made. (Mills 100)

The fascinating citation above brings the idea into light that to analyze the projected meaning in the text, the researcher should look for the discourse through the intention, common sense and the logical conclusion. So far as *The White Tiger is concerned*, the

author Aravind Adiga mentions many phrases with inference in his writing. In the novel, when Ashok visits Laxmangarh, the rural village representing, Darkness. After visiting the village, he remarks, “Everything’s gorgeous in here” (83). He falls in love with the place as it is rich with natural resources. He generalizes the beauty of the village whereas he specializes the goodness of city. But his wife disputes with him insisting that they should return back to America as she cannot resist India anymore. But Ashok immediately falls in love with the richness of India just like the colonizers grasped their possession over the natural resources of the colonizing nations and ruled over the native people creating the myth of their racial superiority and native people’s inferiority. He refuses to return back to America with Pinky so he answers to her, “But... things have changed so much in India. There are so many more things I could do here than in New York now” (89). He has the better vision for staying at India rather going back to America. The sentence denotes an inference that ‘things have changed in India’. This expression requires a pre-supposition that before India was not good place to live, but now it has changed. He makes judgment about India based on his own personal experiences rather than judging it being objective. He was sent to America for his study because the political situation was not correct in India. So he thinks that the situation is no more like before after several years. This inference neglects the lives of the rest of the people in India. If India was not a place where one could survive, how the poor people survived. About the survival of the people in India he adds one more attitude of himself like, “Ah... whisky. How would we survive this country without it’ and then the talking would start” (71). Drinking whisky also makes possible for him to tolerate the life in India. He doubts if there were not availability of whisky, it would be beyond his imagination to live in India. Since he has followed the American values in his life, he only drinks American branded

whisky which can be easily bought in India, too. Adiga draws a binary between the shops of alcohol into two categories.

In the novel, Adiga asserts a full list of ‘English Liquor Shop’ with details and prices. The English liquor is far more expensive than the local Indian alcohol. Also there are so many varieties with heavy sounding English names of it whereas Indian liquor has local names. He categorizes the people on the basis of the liquor, too. He explains like below:

I should explain to you, Mr. Jiabao, that in this country we have two kinds of men: ‘Indian’ liquor men and ‘English’ liquor men. ‘Indian’ liquor was for village boys like me – toddy, arrack, country hooch, ‘English’ liquor, naturally, is for the rich. Rum, whisky, beer, gin – anything the English left behind. (Is there a ‘Chinese liquor,’ Mr Premier? I’d love to take a sip.) (73)

He explicitly divides the people according to their access over alcohol. The rich people have many options of alcohol with remarkable prices. Balram claims that the Indian liquor was for the poor village people like him and their names also sound quite exotic. He also doubts, whether Chinese have such specific liquor using a kind of lightly humorous remark. He adds he would love to taste the Chinese alcohol. This innocent looking sentence establishes a presupposition that he doesn’t believe China produces alcohol. Since China has not imported the alcohol in the Indian market, he does not have idea whether they produce it there in China or not. After this good aspect of contemporary India with the availability of American whisky, Ashok foresees many other positive possibilities to stay at India. Ashok points out the advantage about India on one more aspect, he says, “But in India – or at least, in the Darkness – the rich don’t have drivers, cooks, barbers, and tailors. They simply have servants”

(69). The rich people possess their employees as full time servants only paying for their post as a driver. Thus they control the whole life of their workers until they can serve their masters. So he adds, “Only in India,” he said. ‘Your driver can also make sweets for you. Only in India’ (65). The exaggerating statement, ‘only in India,’ differentiates India from the West. He again promotes the Orientalist perspective to ‘redefine’ the East by showing it different from the West. At such attitude of his son, The Stork agrees with him and adds, “Catch’em young, and you can keep’em for life. A driver in his forties, you get, what, twenty years of service, then his eyes fail. This fellow will last thirty, thirty-five years. His teeth are solid, he’s got hair, he’s in good shape” (66). He views about Balram that they can use him until he is useful for them. This conclusion deducts the fact that the landlords have full authority over the life and body of a servant. They do not believe that servants should decide whether to continue the job or not because they refuse the fact that servants too, have mind inside their body.

With above type of biased viewpoint for judging the feelings and emotions of a servant, the rich people totally neglect that those people also feel the same kind of desire as they have when Asok and Pinky migrate to Delhi along with their driver Balram they start living in Gurgaon; the most American part of the country, Pinky’s dress-up is changed. She starts wearing short skirt with quite open and displaying tops over it. By seeing her in provocative look, Balram is appealed. But she is quite unaware about the effect on part of Balram’s sexual desire. Balram makes an innocent confession about his emotion at the time when he looks to her in this way:

When she sat in the back, I could see half her boobs hanging out of her clothes each time I had to look in the rearview mirror.

This put me in a very bad situation, sir. For one thing, my beak was aroused, which is natural in a healthy young man like me. On the other hand, as you know, master and mistress are like father and mother to you, so how can you get excited by the mistress?

I simply avoided looking at the rearview mirror. If there was a crash, it wouldn't be my fault. (143)

Pinky completely ignores the presence of the driver when she is travelling in car around the market. Such unawareness of the fact that her glamorous look can arouse an appealing sexual desire to Balram since he, too is young and healthy, indicates two generalizations in part of Pinky and Balram differently. Pinky assumes that lower class people do not have any physical desire at all. Balram takes the situation to safe landing by controlling his emotion by supposing his mistress as mother. This supposition points out to the reality that the people in darkness have respect over their masters. So, he finds a solution for his problem by not looking at the rearview mirror. Since he is driving in the busy street of Delhi, there is the possibility of an accident, too. The upper class people do not even suppose that they might be raped, robbed, and deceived by their servants at any rate. The whole system runs over the loyalty and honesty of their servants. The rich people drive with huge amount of money in the car and sometimes even they ask their drivers only taking money from one place to another. So Balram concludes, "The trustworthiness of servants is the basis of entire Indian economy" (175). He draws a generalization on how much the masters have faithfulness over their servants.

Thus the use of inference in *The White Tiger* has helped to build up the ideology supporting for creating 'otherness' by its characters. The inferences used in this novels in common presuppose the idea that the 'darkness' is different from 'light'



just like the 'East' is different from the 'West' for the 'Orientalists.' The people belonging to the 'darkness' have been perceived as the 'others' from the point of view of the so-called enlightened people from 'light.'

#### Use of Metaphors for the Representation of Difference

Beside above analyzed sentences and phrases, *The White Tiger* consists a lot of metaphors used to represent the 'darkness' in India. Sara Mills argues about the implication of the use of metaphor in the text as involving the critic to the thought process by belonging to two different domains. She argues, "In this sense, when you use a metaphor, you are drawing on a body of thought or background knowledge which might in fact skew your analysis or thinking of that particular object" (105). To understand the meaning of the metaphor used in the text, background knowledge is necessary to correlate between the two distinct ideas. Considering this technique, to analyze the metaphors used in *The White Tiger*, reinforces representation of difference experienced by the subaltern character.

The title of the book itself is metaphor referring to the rare animal, 'the white tiger.' Since this novel deals with the story of Balram who is named 'the white tiger' by school inspector after showing his talent among other stupid fellows in the school, the title justifies his character. Just like the white tiger is an exceptional animal that is born only once in a generation, Balram is also quite different from other fellows of his generation. He is a self-made man who overcomes the suppressive life of a servant and became a successful entrepreneur. The title to his name as the white tiger also suggests the characteristic of tiger who is the most powerful among other animals. So, this title indicates the future of Balram that one day he will be able to kill other animals to fulfill his hunger. In the same way, he kills his master Ashok and establishes himself as an entrepreneur who runs the company of his own named,

‘White Tiger Drivers.’ He justifies this title given to him by the inspector during his childhood till he becomes a successful businessman. He asserts, “White Tiger keeps no friends. It’s too dangerous” (302). He gives reason for not making any friends in Bangalore. This title of ‘the white tiger,’ provided during his childhood, predicts his future; his youth. In this way, the metaphor of the white tiger refers to power, freedom and individuality. The greater justification of this metaphor lies in breaking up the ‘rooster coop,’ which implies to the master-servant relationship in the novel.

Adiga provides so many metaphorical names to his narrator throughout the story. The narrator tells his name as ‘Munna’ to his schoolteacher at the first day of his school. The term ‘Munna’ refers to the meaning of boy in Hindi community. So, this is a common name like ‘boy’ in English but Adiga uses this term for special purpose in the novel. During his childhood, the narrator was just like the other common boys of ‘darkness,’ so, to denote his common identity, Adiga names him ‘Munna.’ As he gets admitted in the school, he gets name from his schoolmaster, as ‘Balram.’ This name has been copied through the Hindu Mythology after the name of Lord Krishna’s brother. So the politics here lies behind the power of the schoolmaster because his name is Krishna. In this sense, the schoolteacher, having authority over his student, gives name as his subordinate. Then after proving himself as an exception, Balram is again provided the title ‘the white tiger’ by the school inspector. This title holds the prediction that Balram is not like other people in ‘darkness’ rather he is an exceptional character. This name gives him confidence, courage and power to resist the suppression in the future. When he reaches to Delhi, the other drivers name him as ‘country-mouse.’ This name, too has metaphorical implication that ‘the white tiger’ becomes able to hide his confidence in front of others so that he can plan about his better future without being suspected by anyone. This capability helps him grow

much matured but secretly among the crowds. After all, he changes his name by himself as 'Ashok Sharma' when he starts his own business in Bangalore. This name has been kept after the name of his master whom he killed in Delhi and flew with his money. The implication behind this name is to portray the power he owns as an entrepreneur just like his master used to possess in the past. Thus metaphor of naming after naming to the protagonist plays a vital role in the novel to suggest the transformation in his character like his names.

The 'rooster coop' is another strong metaphor used by Adiga to signify the lives of the servants in India. Balram describes about the 'rooster coop' in the following way:

Go to old Delhi, behind the Jama Masjid, and look at the way they keep chickens there in the market. Hundreds of pale hens and brightly coloured roosters, stuffed tightly into wire-mesh cages, packed 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. On the wooden desk above this coop sits a grinning young butcher, showing off the flesh and organs of a recently chopped-up chicken, still oleaginous with a coating of dark blood. The roosters in the coop smell the blood from above. They see organs of their brothers lying around them. They know they're next. Yet they do not rebel. They do not try to get out of the coop. (174)

The same situation is found in case of the poor people as perceived by Adiga. The servants' fate is just like the chickens who cannot escape through the coop in their whole life. Their destiny is to serve their masters though there are chances for them to

escape from that miserable life if they dare someday. By trusting their servants, the masters leave a huge amount of money on the car. The drivers too do not touch that money due to the fear of losing their lives along with their families, too. But Balram wonders why servants are so much loyal to their masters since the money can give them emancipation from the suppression. He thinks that everybody does not have the quality to see what is beautiful. With that money, they can make a tour to abroad, they can provide a good life and education to their children. Even if knowing that they are being finished one after another by their masters, they remain quiet, just looking at the miserable death of their friends and waiting for their own turn. In this way, the metaphor of 'rooster coop' has a prominent implication in the story of Balram who breaks the coop and frees oneself unlike other fellowmen of his generation.

'The black fort' is also a strong metaphor in the novel, *The White Tiger*, signifying the fear of Balram. This black fort was built by the colonizers in his village during British colonialism. But now nobody visits there and goes into it. Balram goes at the place when he is dissatisfied with his grandmother's domination over his freedom. But he fears to ride it. He narrates, "Then I was alone at the pond – the Black Fort one hill up in front of me" (86). He tries to enter into the fort but he does not have courage to go there because it has been turned out to be the residence of monkeys and birds. There is also myth about this fort in his village that if anybody enters into the fort, a monster eats them. Thus the fort symbolizes for his fear, the monster symbolizing to the landlords. About the beauty of the black fort, he cites the attitude of foreigners who told it is beautiful. He writes, "People who have been to other countries have told me that this fort is as beautiful as anything seen in Europe" (21). Here beauty has been defined by the foreigners; English people. The beauty of the black fort in Indian village has been compared with European fort. So, here also

Adiga focuses on the Anglophilic experience in India. Finally, one day he overcomes over his fear and enters into it and ultimately rides over it. From the top of it, he sees the whole view of his village, the hill beside the village, the pond with lilies and lotuses. He views the beautiful scenery of his village from there. This beauty of his village refers to the beauty of his life as a whole. He claims that unlike other servants of his generation, he started seeing beauty from his own eyes. Balram recalls the line of a famous Muslim poet, Iqbal about slaves, it says, "*They remain slaves because they can't see what is beautiful in this world*" (40). Even during his childhood, he could see what is beautiful in the world. He saw beauty in everything like the temple power, the market, the glistening line of sewage, the landlords' mansions and his own house with the water buffalo. He perceived the each view of his village as the most beautiful sight on earth. So, just eight month later, he 'slits' the throat of Ashok and flees with his money from Delhi to Hyderabad. Thus the black fort symbolizes Balram's passion for revolt against the suppression. Ultimately he becomes successful by getting victory over his fear. The beauty seen through the fort suggests the beauty of his life after becoming a successful businessman.

Balram introduces the reader to one of his most prized possessions, the 'chandelier in his office. The 'chandelier' is also a strong metaphor which denotes to the success of Balram at transforming himself from a peasant into a Bangalore entrepreneur since it has been mentioned twice in *The White Tiger*. Earlier it has been depicted in the house of Ashok in the village of Laxmangarh. Then it has been explained elaborately, in the office of Balram after becoming entrepreneur as he describes:

I stay up the whole night, Your Excellency. And there's no one else in this 150-square-foot office of mine. Just me and a chandelier above

me, although the chandelier has a personality of its own. It's a huge thing, full of small diamond-shaped glass-pieces, just like the ones they used to show in the films of the 1970s. Though it's cool enough at night in Bangalore, I've put a midget fan – five cobwebby blades – right above the chandelier. See, when it turns, the small blades chop up the chandelier's light and fling it across the room. Just like the strobe light at the best discos in Bangalore.

This is only 150-square-foot space in Bangalore with its own chandelier! But it's still a hole in the wall, and I sit here the whole night. (7)

The chandelier represents the source of 'light' to refer Balram's escape from 'darkness.' By chopping the light into a strobe effect using a fan, he suggests for his capability for remaking things. On the other side, he is exercising a control over light and darkness, symbolizing the way he moved from one realm of life to another. In the earlier context of chandelier, lying in the house of Ashok at village, Pinky remarks it as being 'tacky.' Thus the chandelier demonstrates as the wealth and possession of the people they have achieved during their life.

The metaphors analyzed above represent to the ideology of difference characterized by the two categories of people based on their socio-economic level. So, the higher class as well as influenced by the 'Western' spectacle of perceiving the rest of Indian people are given meaning by the discourses and practices of difference in terms of the 'West' and inferior, too. The analysis of metaphors as a whole in *The White Tiger* supports Adiga's endeavor to point out the ideology of difference. The representation of two classes; upper class and lower class and the dichotomy of

relationship based upon class have been explicitly characterized by Ashok and Balram as opposing to each other.

### III. Discourse of Otherness, Representing the Stereotypical

This chapter includes the discursive strategy to observe the discourse of ‘otherness’ represented through the stereotypical characteristics, in *The White Tiger*. To locate the discourse, the writers use their characters in the texts where “A great number of texts draw on stereotypical knowledge when presenting information about characters, particularly when these characters are not ‘fleshed out’ but are simply described briefly” (Mills 124). While analyzing any text, looking for its discourse, researcher may have the possibility to look beyond the text by determining the use of language and its implication in the text. The analysis is associated with the context out of the text to locate the discourse. In *The White Tiger*, to observe the characters and their roles, it is necessary to look for the stereotypical roles in the society. Stuart Hall argues that “Stereotyping reduces people to a few, simple, essential characteristics, which are represented as fixed by Nature” (257). So his theory analyzes how the stereotyping of a character separates him/her so as to by Nature. He applies his theory to study about such stereotyping by referring to their representation to specific community by separating them from others. By making different to the character from others, “We assign him/her to the membership of different groups, according to class, gender, age group, nationality, ‘race’, linguistic group, sexual preference and so on” (Hall 257). According to him, such characters by having specific characteristics in the text represent them to a wider variety of people in society by differentiating them with others. Thus stereotyping signifies to the representation of a character to the particular community where he/she is labeled by showing them different from others. In this way, ‘difference’ as analyzed in chapter II matters on fascination with creating ‘otherness.’ Hall provides four ways of generating discourse on the basis of ‘difference’ in the text; linguistic approach, othering approach, cultural approach and



psychoanalytical approach. The discourse of otherness will be observed through these approaches in the analysis of the characters in this research.

#### Representation of India as 'Other'

Adiga 'others' India from the two most powerful countries of the world; America and China. The discourse of power is illustrated in the novel through the admiration to the America and China and the system there in comparison to India through the character of Americanized character, Ashok. Adiga, even if being Indian himself, stereotypes India and the mainstream people through the perspective of a subaltern protagonist, Balram. He compares and contrasts the political system and people of India with America and China throughout the novel. Ashok comments over the rule of the road time and again. When Pinky wants to drive in Delhi, he discourages her and says, "Pinky, that was New York – you can't drive in India, just look at this traffic. No one follows any rules – people run across the road like crazy – look – look at that" (81). When Pinky insists on driving around Delhi, Ashok discourages her by replying, "This is India, not America" (121). He means to say in India nobody is following the traffic rules and regulation, so it is difficult to drive but on the contrary, he is admiring America where everybody strictly follows the rules and regulations. In terms of the traffic system on the road, he 'others' India from America, stereotyping with negative characteristic to the rest of the Indians. Adiga not only separates India with America but also with China by comparing the roads. Balram comments about the roads of India like, "In Beijing apparently they've got a dozen ring roads. Here we have one. No wonder we keep getting jams. Nothing is planned. How will we ever catch up with the Chinese" (138)? He again separates India with negative representation by comparing it with China. Similarly the characters keep on comparing and contrasting between America and India several

times. Mukesh suggests his brother Ashok, “Things are complicated in India, Ashok. It’s not like in America. Please reserve your judgment” (137). In this statement, too, Ashok is suggested to move differently in India presupposing the idea that in America, it is easy to perform any task but in India the situation is different. Balram witnesses the discrimination among people on the basis of their classes when he goes to the police station. He narrates:

A man on a bicycle getting killed – the police don’t even have to register the case. A man on a motorbike getting killed – they would *have* to register that. A man in a car getting killed – they would have thrown me in jail. (309)

This extract illuminates on the issue of discrimination among the upper class people and lower class people being practiced in India by the police authority, too. This shows the stereotypical system of police authority about their representation as being prejudiced to the lower class people. Adiga represents Indian authority as a whole running after the bribery and corruption at such an extent that everybody has been portrayed as violating the system.

Adiga presents the picture of India diseased with bribery everywhere as Balram witnesses his master Ashok “stepped out with the red bag and slammed the door” (212). Ashok carries a bag full of money to bribe the minister for his family business. Furthermore, Balram eavesdrops the conversation between the assistant of minister and Ashok:

‘Don’t worry, Ashok. I’ll make sure the minister gives your father a call tomorrow.’

‘Thank you. My family appreciates your help.’

...‘Don’t you have to work on the elections?’

‘The elections? All wrapped up. It’s a landslide. The minister said so this morning. Elections, my friend, can be managed in India. It’s not like in America.’ (213)

After providing money to the minister for the election, Ashok innocently asks minister’s assistant about the preparation of election. The assistant replies in quite satirical tone by othering India from America with the inference that it can be managed with the influence of money. Through the point of view of a driver, he discloses this side as Balram observes his master Ashok in Delhi is running after the brokers with huge amount of money to give for the leaders. Balram narrates the conversation between Mukesh and Ashok in the following way:

We’re driving past Gandhi, after just having given a bribe to a minister. It’s a *fucking joke*, isn’t it.’

‘You sound like your wife now,’ the Mongoose said. ‘I don’t like swearing – it’s not part of our traditions here.’

But Mr Ashok was too red in the face to keep quiet.

‘It is a *fucking joke* – our political system and I’ll keep saying it as long as I like.’ (137)

Through this piece of narration, Adiga highlights the Indian political system is the system of bribery, corruption and rottenness. During the time of election, there is the play of giving bribes to the minister for the business. Balram overhears Mukesh talking with his brother Ashok about how the ministers demand for money:

‘The minister wants more. It’s election time. Every time there’s elections, we hand out cash. Usually to both sides, but this time the government is going to win for sure. The opposition is in a total mess. So we just have to pay off the government, which is good for us. I’ll

come with you the first time, but it's a lot of money, and you may have to go a second and third time too. And then there are a couple of bureaucrats we have to grease. Get it? (240)

In this way, Adiga highlights the corruption in India. Including the bureaucrats to the ministers, all are working under the influence of money. So, Balram remarks about the parliamentary system of India by using the dirty profanity. He also satirizes the election system in India. Adiga makes a statement about this system through Balram's mouthpiece. He writes, "Stories of rottenness and corruption are always the best stories, aren't they" (50)? Through the example of Balram, who does not even know his age exactly gets the voting right during election after a man in government gives him a birth certificate by making him eligible to vote. He states, "So I got a birthday from the government" (97). He again satirizes how the people in government fake the age of poor people to make them eligible. Adiga further highlights the ugly side of the election system. Balram says, "I am India's most faithful voter, and I still have not seen the inside of a voting booth" (102). Such description creates a kind of distrust over the whole political system of India to the reader. So, India has been depicted as having its contrasting image with America in the novel.

The *White Tiger* has been written into epistolary form, addressing to the Chinese Premier, Wen Jiabao. Adiga chooses this form of writing to tell the story of Balram, how a subaltern turned into successful entrepreneur. Since Balram is the first person narrator in the novel, he writes about all of his physical activities as well as mental activities in the letter. He feels comfortable to share his own story in the form of writing letter so that he can narrate all his deeds that may be good or bad as per the social judgment. He asserts, "When you have heard the story of how I got to Bangalore and became one of its most successful (though probably least known)

businessmen, you will know everything there is to know about how entrepreneurship is born, nurtured and developed in this, the glorious twenty-first century of man” (6). He murders his own master Ashok and flees with his money. Since murder is inexcusable crime in human society, Balram provides enough reasons behind this murder so that readers feel a kind of catharsis. He justifies his master’s murder by himself in the following way:

Yet even if all my chandeliers come crashing down to the floor – even if they throw me in jail and have all the other prisoners dip their beaks into me – even if they make me walk the wooden stairs to the hangman’s noose – I’ll never say, I made a mistake that night in Delhi when I slit my master’s throat. (321)

These remarks show Balram’s confidence over his past, he does not regret about being a murderer. In any condition, he would not assume his mistake for that case because he did it for the better. He gives enough reason behind the murder as he writes, “*See – Mr Ashok is giving money to all these politicians in Delhi so that they will excuse him from the tax he has to pay. And who owns that tax, in the end? Who but the ordinary people of this country – you*” (244)! Balram talks to himself about murdering and taking the money from Ashok. He convinces himself to murder his master because the money which is being used for bribery after all belongs to the people like him. So he thinks that would not be considered a crime. He is not even suspected as a murderer by anybody including Indian police even if his poster has been displayed everywhere in the public places like train station. Balram gives reasons beside this aspect that he looks like many other Indians in his country. In reality, everybody has got different face from each other, so face is the most effective tool to identify a person everywhere in the world. But in the novel, Adiga plays with

this fact by presenting Balram as a common man who not only represents to the subalterns in India but also possesses a common face, too. So nobody can identify him through his photograph. By exaggerating this fact, Adiga reinforces the discourse of discrimination between rich and poor people. Balram also mentions a glimpse that he has a good relationship with police in Bangalore. After murdering Ashok he takes his money and starts business. He runs a company of himself. This indicates that he has now a lot of money so he can bribe the police, too.

Entrepreneur and entrepreneurship is also an important provocative aspect in *The White Tiger*, used by Adiga to point out the business policy of India in the era of globalization. He introduces himself as “a self-taught entrepreneur” to the Chinese Premier (6). About the condition of entrepreneur in India, he makes a comparison with China in the following way:

...you Chinese are far more ahead of us in every respect, except that you don't have entrepreneurs. And our nation, though it has no drinking water, electricity, sewage system, public transportation, sense of hygiene, discipline, courtesy, or punctuality, *does* have entrepreneurs. Thousands and thousands of them. Especially in the field of technology. And these entrepreneurs – *we* entrepreneurs – have set up all these outsourcing companies that virtually run America now.

(4)

Balram makes a satirical commentary over the condition of India as it is in a miserable condition from every aspect. In the statement above, he compares India with China and America and makes India ‘other’ than those developed countries. Ironically he presents the reality of India that it has many entrepreneurs than those developed countries. About the characteristics of entrepreneur, he states, “... the

Indian entrepreneur has to be straight and crooked, mocking and believing, sly and sincere at the same time” (9). By this statement, he means that he has learnt all the techniques of handling the issues necessary to be a businessman. He also suggests that being an entrepreneur means having not only money but also power. So, even if knowing that Balram was the murderer, police is ignoring the fact because he has bought them. This issue suggests to the condition of corruption in India.

In *The White Tiger*, Adiga even criticizes America with negative judgment whereas admires China in a full form. At first, he seems to be admiring America but finally he makes negative statements. Balram quotes the attitude towards America as he claims that he had heard on radio as follows:

For this I blame the president of America; he has made buggery perfectly legal in his country, and men are marrying other men instead of women. This was on radio. This is leading to the decline of the white man. Then white people use mobile phones too much, and that is destroying their brains. It’s known fact. Mobile phones cause cancer in the brain and shrink your masculinity; the Japanese invented them to diminish the white man’s brain and balls at the same time. (305)

In this way, Balram criticizes the Americans to be getting spoiled after mobile phones and other vices, too. He also comments for them for being homosexual which is not only unconventional lifestyle but also un-productive sexual relationship. So, Adiga indicates the diminishing power of America gradually. So, he also predicts about America: “in twenty years’ time, it will be just us yellow men and brown men at the top of the pyramid, and we’ll rule the whole world” (305). This remark refers that Adiga is forecasting the American power decreasing day per day. Not only its power but also its population is going to be decreased according to Adiga. He blames to the

president of America for granting excessive freedom to its people. To suggest this issue, first he praises America as it is still holding the representation of the most powerful country in the world. But the criticism made by Adiga refers to the diminishing power of this country in near future. He further focuses this issue with the statement, “Don’t waste your money on those American books. They’re so *yesterday*” (6). Likewise, the death of Americanized character Ashok also suggests to the theme of America’s decreasing position at the critical level.

The politics behind representing China in a positive way has its connection with the ideology of a subaltern’s rise. In *The White Tiger*, on the one hand, Balram gives fascinating statements about China referring to its rising power along with the system of communism. On the other hand, the plot development where the subaltern hero comes into power also suggests the ideology of power and politics. Balram satirizes the system of democracy in India by comparing the system of China:

I gather you yello-skinned men, despite your triumphs in sewage, drinking water, and Olympic gold medals, still don’t have democracy. Some politician on the radio was saying that that’s why we Indians are going to beat you: we may not have sewage, drinking water, and Olympic gold medals, but we *do* have democracy. (96)

Actually, democracy is meant for the people, by the people and to the people as concerned to its motto. But in India, it is far behind the motto by neglecting the people. So, Adiga shows contrasts with the political system of China. He envisions the future of Indian people working in collaboration with Chinese. He sums up his attitude in the following way:

Now, Your Excellency, a great leap forward in Sino\_indian relations has been taken in the past seven nights. *Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai*, as they



say. I have told you all you need to know about entrepreneurship – how it is fostered, how it overcomes hardships, how it remains steadfast to its true goals, and how it is rewarded with the gold medal of success. (317)

Through the above statement, Balram concludes his vision for the better future of India proceeding towards the global market walking hand-in-hand with China.

Through his own story, he suggests that the ideology of Americanization does not function in today's world. As China is proving itself to be amazingly progressive in the global market, he makes suggestion to be like the Chinese to the Indian people. He provides the reason behind admiring China as being an Indian in this way:

I read about your history in a book, *Exciting Tales of the Exotic East*, that I found on the pavement, back in the days when I was trying to get some enlightenment by going through the Sunday secondhand book market in Old Delhi. This book was mostly about pirates and gold in Hong Kong, but it did have some useful background information too: it said that you Chinese are great lovers of freedom and individual liberty. The British tried to make you their servants, but you never let them do it. I admire that, Mr Premier. (5)

He presents enough reasons for his attraction to the Chinese people and their history. Since the title of the book, '*Exciting Tales of the Exotic East*' represents the Orientalist writing history about China. China has been assumed as the mysterious country by the Westerners as it has not let freedom to explore itself among the world. So, the Westerners are interested towards its history. The phrase 'lovers of freedom and equality' creates ambiguity since China does not provide much freedom to its citizens as compared with other countries. But so far as the freedom is concerned, if

applied in the scenario of National liberty, China never became colonized to the Europe. Balram makes this statement more clear by writing, “Only three nations have never let themselves be ruled by foreigners: China, Afghanistan, and Abyssinia” (5). Thus Balram respects for Chinese for letting them free of colonization. In this regard, Adiga is ignoring Nepal, the immediate neighboring country of India. There is a politics behind disregarding Nepal since, Nepal, too is the free country throughout the history. Adiga does not include Nepal just to represent it as the negative ‘other’ by stereotyping the Nepali people in the novel.

#### Stereotyping of Nepali as ‘Others’

In *The White Tiger*, Adiga uses stereotypical role for the Nepali characters by portraying them from Mongolian race involved in a typical profession. In many texts Indian writers as well as in Hindi movies, Nepali people are portrayed in stereotypical roles. Balram introduces with Ram Bahadur as “A sly, slant-eyed Nepali with a white moustache peered at me through the bars of the gate” (59). This type of physical description as well as his activity depicted in the novel denote him as being from Mongolian race and doing duty as a gatekeeper. Similarly, he mentions about Nepali girls as “light-skinned Nepali women, in gorgeous red petticoats” also suggest that they too are from Mongolian ethnicity. So, Nepali characters in *The White Tiger* have been represented on their stereotypical characteristics like many other texts produced in India.

Their role also defers from their gender; if the character is male, he is described as a gatekeeper for the rich landlords of India like Ram Bahadur in this novel. This stereotypical identity has its history of long ago. During the British colonialism in India, the ‘East India Company’ of that time invaded war into Nepal. During 1814 A.D. Anglo-Gorkha war took place. Though Nepal had to sign the

Sugauli-treaty with 'East India Company,' by accepting the victory of Anglos over Nepal, the armies of Nepal were praised for being veteran fighters. From that time onwards, Nepali people were considered as 'brave-Gorkhali' and British government opened 'Gorkha Bharti Centre' for them. Gorkhali soldiers also fought on behalf of British government during both of the First World War and Second World War. During the 'Sepoy mutiny' in India in 1857, the Prime Minister of Nepal Jung Bahadur Rana sent Gorkhali soldiers to help for the British colonialists to suppress the rebellion. After being happy with the help of Nepali government, British Governor gave back five districts to Nepal which they had taken during 'Sugauli-treaty.' After the decolonization, Indian government, too admitted thousands of Gorkhali soldiers for their army. Thus Gorkhali soldiers have their own peculiar identity as brave soldiers since they fight till the death honestly but do not leave the battle by assuming their defeat. In other word, this identity of Gorkhali soldiers has been associated with their brevity worldwide. In the novel, Ram Bahadur is appointed as a loyal slave to the Stork family. His position as a gatekeeper represents to the entire Nepali people supposing their stereotypical role as a faithful servant. Nepal is the immediate neighbor of India with open border. So, many poor Nepali people go there in India to work as coolie, servant, gatekeeper etc. Similarly, many Indians are also found in Nepal collecting the waste materials from door to door and selling them to earn for their living. So, in Nepal not all of the people belong to lower class, the texts produced in India draw them in such roles. In the novel, Balram narrates the part of Ram Bahadur referring him as 'king of Nepal.' Adiga ironically presents him as having duty to his master being the most faithful over years. Sara Mills talks about how texts draw on stereotypical perspective while referring to the characters with peculiar and short information about them. She states, "In order to summon up a

character quickly, a form of shorthand is used which the reader decodes with reference to stereotypical knowledge” (124). This is a technique of ‘referential strategy,’ in which the members of society are categorized including reference by their tropes, biological characteristics and metaphors in the form of part standing for the whole. Such a referential characteristic of Ram Bahadur only represents the Nepali male members in Indian texts like *The White Tiger*.

In the novel, *The White Tiger*, there is stereotypical gender discrimination between male and female while representing to the Nepali characters. The female characters are also explained with ‘slant-eyed’ to suggest that they too belong to the Mongolian race. Balram visits the Nepali girls in the red light area, involved in the prostitution. He explains about the American and Nepali girls differently which is as follows:

Up in one building, sitting on a windowsill in such a way that we could see the full spread of their gleaming dark legs, were the ‘American’ girls in short skirts and high platform shoes, carrying pink handbags with names in English written on them in sequins. They were slim and athletic for men who like the Western kind. In the corner, sitting in the threshold of an open house, the ‘traditional’ – fat, chunky types in saris, for those who like value for their money. There were eunuchs in one window – teenagers in the next window. The face of a small boy appeared from between a woman’s legs and then vanished.

A blinding flesh of light: a blue door opened, and four light-skinned Nepali women, in gorgeous red petticoats, looked out.

‘Them!’ I shouted. ‘Them! Them! Them!’

‘Good,’ the old driver said. ‘I like that too – I always go for the foreign ones.’ (58)

Adiga describes about the American girls minutely explaining all about her look and dress-up. She has been attributed the descriptions like ‘slim’, ‘tall’, wearing ‘short skirt’, ‘high heels’, and carrying a ‘pink handbag.’ These types of descriptions create an image of fragmentation of a beautiful white girl who wants to go for the ‘Western’ taste. Whereas Nepali girl has been discussed only little about her appearance and dress-up as she looks ‘light-skinned’ and is wearing attractive ‘red petticoat’. Thus these girls from two different territories and culture have been represented as their stereotypical appearances. The American girl has been explained as she like an ‘athletic’ for her sexual performance with men who like ‘Western’ style. Thus on the one hand, female characters from foreign countries are shown as sex-objects either they are from America or Nepal. On the other hand, they are discriminated on the basis of their race and colour. Adiga has used intensifying and mitigation strategies to locate the issue of nationalist and ethnicist discourse through the depiction of Indian, Nepalese, American and Chinese characters. Balram again mentions about the Nepali girls in his next visit to red light area. He writes, “The Nepalis up there, behind the barred window, were really good looking: very light skinned and with these Chinese eyes that just drive us Indian men mad. I shook the pimp’s hand off my face” (250). This description denotes that Nepali girl is only beautiful at the condition that she looks like Chinese. Since, China is a developed country, Adiga admires all of the aspects in China even if the Chinese beauty, too. They show the Mongolian characters representing Nepal, to make them different from the Indian people.

## Representation of Subalterns

Similarly, the discourse of discrimination has been dealt at the level of religion, caste system in India to represent the subalterns as 'others' from the mainstream. The subaltern people establish a cultural belongingness among them for being different from the mainstream. Adiga explores this fact through the attitude and activities of Balram. During his driving career at Delhi, he observes the lives of beggars, orphans, homeless, and working people like him in the street. When he has stopped at the traffic signal along with his master Ashok and Mukesh sitting on the backseat of the car, they see a group of beggars running after one car to other. Balram describes, "One beggar was carrying another on his shoulders and going from car to car; the fellow on his shoulders had no legs below his knees" (240). On the one hand, Balram is moved by the condition of such fellows running after penny on the street, on the other hand, his masters are talking about thousands of rupees to bribe the ministers by ignoring the poor beggars. Balram finally gives one rupee to the fellow without legs through the window of car. Unfortunately, his master shouted at him, "Why the hell did you give that beggar a rupee? What cheek! Turn the music off" (241). This expression quite contrary to Balram's emotion towards the beggar people suggests the cultural belongingness of Balram and difference with his masters. Similarly, Balram also gives a coin to the child at train station who is throwing water at him. This belongingness has been further developed when Balram visits to the family of the victim in Bangalore, when one of his drivers had hit a boy to death. He sates, "I pointed to the brown envelope lying on the table. 'There are twenty-five thousand rupees in here. I don't give it to you because I have to, but because I want to. Do you understand'" (312)? Thus he not only gives money to the family but also

assure them to take the other son as his driver. Since, he too was a subaltern once, he assimilates their pain with himself.

In terms of religion, too Adiga comments about the discrimination and sense of 'otherness' prevalent in India. In *The White Tiger*, Balram finds out that Ram Persad fakes himself as being Hindu though he is a Muslim. Due to his religion, he may not get the job of driver for the Stork family. He has to hide his religion to get a job despite of being a qualified driver. The rich people like the diasporic character Ashok, prefer their servants for being religious. Ashok justifies his desire to live in India is because of their servants. He explains, "So Balram here touched his eye as a mark of respect. The villagers are so religious in the Darkness" (90). Ashok does not follow any caste system in his personal life but is well-aware in case of his servants. He feels proud that all of his servants belong to the higher caste. In case of Balram, he lies his masters that he does not drink alcohol because he belongs to the caste of 'Halwai.' In India, people used to follow the profession according to their castes. So, Balram's destiny on the basis of his caste was to be a 'sweet maker.' He alters the stereotypes in his case, and becomes a driver.

On one side, Adiga represents the closeness among the subaltern people, on the other he displays the mainstream having sense of difference with the marginalized people. Throughout *The White Tiger*, the representative of master class character, Ashok ignores the feelings of Balram and behaves with him as if Balram does not have a mind and heart. Balram has internalized the fact that his masters are meant to punish him when they wish as in the minor mistakes, too. Balram in the rearview mirror of the car catches sight of Ashok and Pinky having intimate sensual activities on the backseat. He is also caught by the sight of Ashok, so he is scared by him. He better expresses his thoughts of the moment in his words like:

I felt like a child that had been watching his parents through a slit in their bedroom door. My heart began to sweat – I half expected him to catch me by the collar, and fling me to the ground, and stamp me with his boots, the way his father used to do to fishermen in Laxmangarh. (159)

Balram's words highlight the negative expectation about his master he commits a minor mistake. He is scared with them because they have put them in the supreme position much above than their servants, so they can do whatever they like. Adiga has used the linguistic implication of exercising power over the servants by their masters by using short and commanding sentences. In the novel, the masters have just short sentences with their servants. For example, "I command you", "I command you to drive Baram! Drive!" are the representational remarks ordered to Balram by his master (160).

Adiga creates a situation where Ashok becomes helpless, powerless and suffers from depression as his wife Pinky leaves him. At this moment, Balram takes care of his master like his own intimate partner. He narrates, "Has there ever been a master-servant relationship like this one? He was so powerless, so lost, my heart just had to melt" (186). He feels sympathetic to Ashok's miserable condition. He even puts his hand in Ashok's mouth "out and wiped the vomit from his lips" (187). When Ashok suffers from misery, Balram too feels pain. As he describes, "When master's life is in chaos, so is the servant's. I thought, Maybe he's sick of Delhi now. Will he go back to Dhanbad? What happens to me then? My belly churned. I thought I would crap right there, on my seat, on the gearbox" (185). He also feels closeness with his master in such an extent that at the one side he feels pity to him, on the other, he thinks about his own career too. This type of intimacy between Ashok and Balram



further develops when Ashok eats with Balram in the restaurant of lower class people. But this belongingness is immediately over when Mukesh comes there to take care of his brother Ashok. Balram asserts, “The moment he arrived, everything changed for me. The intimacy was over between me and Mr Ashok. Once again, I was only the driver – Once again, I was only the eavesdropper” (188). In such a way, just after being strong with the support of his brother, Ashok gets distanced with Balram. So the intimacy between them gets over as Ashok starts commenting about the family of Balram in front of him, using third person pronoun. He comments, “Sometimes they express themselves so movingly, these villagers” with his brother even if Balram was standing over there (191). In this way, Balram perceives the attitude of the upper class people towards the lower class people has treating like different. So, Balram conceives the idea of resistance to this condition.

Balram’s transformation from poor socio-economic level to high-profile businessman implies to an important assessment in *The White Tiger*. Adiga aims to show that individuals can fight independently to escape the system of suppression. As Balram is proud of his father’s decision to go against the law of caste system by pulling rikshaw instead of becoming cook is an indication of his sample space of emancipation possibilities. So he recollects the memory of his father in his letter to the Chinese Premier for several times. His self-identity as an entrepreneur foregrounds his philosophy: though he has recognized the system as unjust, cruel, and brutal but the solution is to make over the system by any means necessary that help to escape from poverty into material wealth. Balram stands out as the role-model for those people from darkness, who can fight individually for their emancipation by avoiding wait for the revolution. He remembers a line that says, “Maybe once in a hundred years there is a revolution that frees the poor” (303). But revolution that has

become successful to free the slaves from their torturous slavery in the history of world politics, there are only few cases. He also adds that there is not any history from India about the great liberation of marginalized people. He claims this fact by making a satirical remark about the Indian people who “are still waiting for the war of their freedom to come from somewhere else – from the jungles, from the mountains, from China, from Pakistan” (304). So Balram suggests for the people from darkness, to fight for themselves from their own level just like him.

Adiga highlights the way Balram is transformed from a suppressed servant to a successful businessman by resisting the system by himself. The resistance of Balram to the Ne-Orientalist discourse has been depicted through various angles in *The White Tiger*. First, he stops following the caste system prevalent in Indian community. He does not follow the profession of a sweet maker as his caste ‘Halwai’ is supposed to, instead he chooses to be a driver unlike the other members of his family. Secondly, he challenges the orders of his grandmother by going against her will because in his family she is the power holder who exploits the other members of his family. Thirdly, he starts living under a secret life like the rich people in Delhi while he is a driver to his master Ashok. Unlike the rest of the drivers, he starts observing the lifestyle of his master class people by entering into the Mall disguising himself as a rich person. Fourth fact about Balram’s resistance is found when he criticizes the Anglophile from every aspect in the novel. When Balram gets into power, he prefers Indian girls rather than white girls. He provides glimpse of future India getting a leap into “Sino-Indian relations” unlike the previous condition of preferring the American culture (317). Finally, Adiga also captures the transformation in exercise of power over his drivers and treat them as inferior. Balram summarizes the necessity of transformation in this way:

Once I was a driver to a master, but now I am a master of drivers. I don't treat them like servants – I don't slap, or bully, or mock anyone. I don't insult any of them by calling them my 'family', either. They're my employees, I'm their boss, that's all. I make them sign a contract and I sign it, too, and both of us must honour that contract. That's all. If they notice the way I talk, the way I dress, the way I keep things clean, they'll go up in life. If they don't they'll be drivers all their lives. I leave the choice up to them. When the work is done I kick them out of the office: no chitchat, no cups of coffee. (302)

This is a remarkable indication Adiga asserts about the transformation in the relationship of employer-employee is no more like master-servant. In this way, Adiga establishes a hope for the future India not running after the traditional socio-economic structure where imitating of Western culture and perspective was supposed as superior by the Indian themselves while judging and treating the India and Indian backward people as inferior. Balram's rise and transformation alters the social, economic and political system as a whole. He provides a new insight to perceive India heading towards equality rupturing the class discrimination.

However, worth noting discourse Adiga aims to produce is 'othering' India by the writer himself through the representation of India as suffering from internal socio-economic conflict among two classes of people. This type of socio-economic disparity and discrimination has deprived India from the overall development. Adiga accuses the Orientalist perspective of othering to the subalterns of India as the main issue in *The White Tiger*. At the same time, he propagates a new ideology of co-operation and respect among the all classes of people at their own position.

#### IV. Conclusion

The research has tried to expose the politics of 'othering' the subalterns in *The White Tiger*, along with the consequences it has invited into the Post-colonial Indian scenario. So far as the plot is concerned, the characters in authority are 'othering' the subaltern people on the basis of stereotypical representation assuming them as subordinate and oneself as masters. Just like the Orientalists during the period of colonialism developed the myth of Westerner's superiority over the inferiority of Easterners, the 'Westernized' characters like Ashok, too exercises power to suppress the subaltern character, Balram. Adiga portrays the socio-economic picture of India as divided into two categories; 'Light' and 'Darkness' influencing the whole political system of India to be corrupted like the people in power. By displaying the co-relation between social and political backwardness, Adiga attempts to address the hindrance of India for progressing in the global market. So, he contrasts the system of India with America and China in *The White Tiger* for several times.

Though he offers positive remarks to America while comparing India with America, for having discipline unlike in India, finally he criticizes the former for granting excessive freedom to people. Adiga blames American president for allowing people using mobile phones, for being homosexuals etc. This kind of freedom has been diminishing the power of the white people as a whole. So, Adiga predicts about the future of the white people as losing power among the world gradually. He envisions the rise of China as a global power in recent future as it has the system of Communism. Adiga admires China after its business policy, political system, social equality and economic independency of the people.

Adiga, through the character of Balram, provides the message of transformation in the system of India by resisting the old system of discrimination.

Just like the white man's power is disappearing over the rise of yellow man's power, the mainstream society in India is also functionless, so a new subaltern hero rises to alter the system for the development of India. To weave this message, Adiga explores his attitude that India as being the geographically proximate country with China, should be transformed socially, economically, politically, technologically like the neighbor. India, having open border and the most intimate inter-relationship with Nepal, stereotypes the Nepali character to represent Nepal as 'other.' Thus Adiga holds the power as an author to represent the countries as per his perspective.

To sum-up, inside the plot, the Indian characters in authority are 'othering' the subaltern people. but in reality, as a writer of the text, *The White Tiger*, Aravind Adiga is 'othering' India by showing it different with negative characteristics in comparison to the powerful country China. Adiga successfully transforms his protagonist Balram from a subaltern into power as an entrepreneur to predict that an individual effort can be a milestone to change for better. Adiga's politics behind Ashok's character as a stereotypical white has an important influence in the novel. At first, Ashok is represented as the 'Westerner' wit, so reader may expect a change he would make for the diseased Indian system and make it like America where there is no discrimination among people and no corruption in the political system. But unfortunately, he assimilates himself with the people of his class and exercises power over them as well as promotes corruption by bribing to the ministers. So, Adiga handovers Ashok's money to Balram which was being used for corruption, and kills Ashok symbolically referring to the the Orientalist attitude. Adiga justifies this murder by rupturing the binarisms and othering the subalterns as negative representation when Balram gets into the power.

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