

**“You either eat or get eaten up”:
The Image of the Rooster Coop
in Aravind Adiga’s *The White Tiger* (2008)**

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Abstract

This paper is a study of the image of the rooster coop in the age of post-globalization through delineating poverty, servitude and corruption in Aravind Adiga’s novel *The White Tiger* (2008). The image of the ‘rooster coop’ symbolizes the India of darkness, and represents a mental and psychological coop in which the poor live. This study is done in terms of the Theory of Social Identity and Self-Categorization by Henri Tajfel and John Turner. This theory started in Social Psychology according to which there are three psychological processes in evaluating people as ‘we’ or ‘they’: categorization, identification and comparison. The central narrative of *The White Tiger* focuses on Balram Halwai’s journey from being a poor villager to a rich businessman. Adiga depicts two Indias: India of darkness and India of light. This classification results in the system of servitude which is depicted in the metaphor of the ‘rooster coop’. Roosters in a coop at market watch one another slaughtered one by one but they are unable or unwilling to rebel and break out of the coop.

The image of the Rooster Coop is represented mentally and psychologically. Throughout the image of the rooster coop, Adiga presents the extreme poverty and corruption that plague modern India. He also condemns the oppression and hopelessness endured by the lower classes. Through the novel, Aravind Adiga makes comment upon the complete lack of morals within India. *The White Tiger* can be read as a critique of India in post-globalization era. It is supposed that in this post-globalization era the gap between the poor and the rich is narrow and not very wide in new India. Balram could ride the wave of globalization by establishing his company of White Tiger Technology Drivers. Although he achieved self-improvement in social hierarchy by means of immoral acts like lying, killing and stealing, he never received any punishment because both policemen and judges are bribed. It is the corrupted globalized India.

Key Words:

Social Identity Theory, White Tiger, Adiga, Balram, Rooster Coop, Darkness, Light, Corruption, Poverty, Servitude, Post-globalization.

Introduction

Aravind Adiga (1974 -) is a contemporary Indian novelist who was born in India, educated in America and lives in Australia. His first novel *The White Tiger* (2008) won the Man Booker Prize for Fiction. This novel takes the form of a series of unsent letters to the Chinese Prime Minister, Wen Jiabao, on the evening of his visit to the Indian city, Bangalore. The protagonist and the narrator, Balram Halwai, writes his letters in order to describe his experience as a servant and driver to a wealthy Indian family; and to exemplify the contradictions and complications of the “new India” in the age

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of post-globalization. Balram’s goal is to explain the way the Indian social system is organized. He wants the Chinese Premier to know the story of how the Indian poor live and suffer, and at the same time how entrepreneurship in India is born and developed in the 21st century. Balram selects the Chinese Prime Minister because he sees that China is a free-loving nation and a country that has never been subject to a master-slave relationship with the West. By addressing his letters to the Chinese Premier, Adiga thinks of a powerful world leader. The goal of Wen Jiabao’s visit to India is to know why India is so good at producing entrepreneurs. So Balram is supposed to tell him about the corruption of power and entrepreneurs in post-globalized India.

The white tiger of this novel is Balram Halwai, a poor Indian villager who wants to resist corruption and poverty even if he is led to commit a crime of murdering his master and stealing his money in order to be a businessman. By means of lying, betraying, killing and stealing, Balram makes his ascent into the oppressive and corrupted upper class of Indian businessmen. After being a servant, he became a master who has servants.

Questions of the Research Paper

This paper attempts to answer various and several questions such as: What does the social identity theory mean? What is meant by the image of rooster coop? To what extent does the novelist link the image of the rooster coop to different episodes of *The White Tiger*? How is the image of the rooster coop relevant to the poor Indian people? In what way is the image of white tiger related to the image of rooster coop?

The Social Identity Theory and Theory of Self-Categorization

In this paper *The White Tiger* is analyzed in terms of Henri Tajfel's Theory of Social Identity (1979) and John Turner's Theory of Self-Categorization (1987). The Social Identity Theory is related to Social Psychology and conducted by the British social psychologist Henri Tajfel and his colleagues in 1979. It was developed to explain how individuals create and define their position in society. The principles of this theory progress from a focus on the individual to a focus on the social group as a whole. This theory includes topics such as self-perception, self-esteem and self-presentation. The core of this theory is the concept that people have many different identities and move between them easily and sometimes rapidly, depending on the level of identity activated by one's current situational context. Social Identity Theory is concerned with the psychological study of the interaction between individual and society. It was originally developed to understand the psychological basis of intergroup discrimination (Tajfel and Turner, Social Identity Theory 9). It emphasized the role of group membership in determining individual behaviors (Hornsey 204). In their book, *Social Psychology*, Michael Hogg and Graham Vaughan define social identity as "the individual's self-concept derived from perceived membership of social groups" (Hogg & Vaughan 83). According to the Social Identity theory an individual has multiple "social identities." Thus, it is a social psychological theory because it is a mixture of motivational and cognitive constituents. This theory has three dimensions: Social milieu, social affiliations and social relationships (Taylor 45).

Self-categorization theory is a constituent part of the social identity theory. According to Alexander Haslam and

others, self-categorization theory is “a theory in social psychology that describes the circumstances under which a person will perceive collections of people (including themselves) as a group, as well as the consequences of perceiving people in group terms” (Haslam 121). In its later years, this theory has been extended to be applied to further topics such as personality, leadership, outgroup classification. Self-categorization theory is proposed by J. C. Turner, a British social psychologist along with others. According to Turner people spontaneously categorize themselves and others according to their positions in the social environment. Examples of these social categories can be the blacks, the whites, the poor, the rich, the literate, the illiterate ... etc. People tend to define themselves based on their social categories more often than their individual characteristics. According to this theory the division of people all over the world is based on social and psychological ground:

We divided the world into “them” and “us” based through a process of social categorization. Social categorization is one explanation for prejudice attitudes (i.e. “them” and “us” mentality) which leads to in-groups and out-groups (Tajfel and Turner, Integrative Theory 33).

This theory of self-categorization focuses also on “the psychological nature and the social basis of group membership” (Hogg, *Intergroup Processes* 66). It is looked at as “a dynamic process that depends on the social context and it is known throughout the comparison relationships” (Turner & Onorato 54). It is considered dangerous because “it leads to passive feeling towards the competitor” (Goldstein 12). Richard Moreland sees that the “best” categorization is one

that maximizes the similarities and minimizes the differences among people (Moreland 2).

In the Social Identity Theory Tajfel and Turner propose that there are three psychological or mental processes central in evaluating people as “we” or “they” (i.e. “in-group” and “out-group”): social categorization, social identification and social comparison (Moreland 185). These processes take place in a particular order. In the first process ‘social categorization’, the individual categorizes himself according to his social position i.e. lower, middle or upper class; rich or poor, black or white etc. And then comes the second process: social identification according to which the individual adopts the identity of the group he categorizes himself as belonging to. If, for example, an individual categorizes himself as poor, he will adopt the identity of the poor and begin to act in the ways he believes the poor act.

The third and final psychological process in the Social Identity Theory is social comparison through which people compare their group with other groups in terms of prestige and social standing. Social comparison is the process by which people determine the relative value or social standing of a particular group and its members. Once an individual categorizes himself as part of a group and identifies with that group, he then tends to compare his group with other groups. Once two groups identify themselves as rivals, they are forced to compete in order for the members to maintain their self-esteem. Competition and hostility between groups thus start to appear. Just as people want to feel proud of themselves as individuals (personal identity), they also want to feel proud of their in-groups (social identity).

Generally, individuals wish to maintain a positive social identity by maintaining their group’s favorable social standing

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over that of relevant out-groups. This in-group favoritism can result in negative and discriminatory outcomes. The central hypothesis of this Social Identity Theory is that group members of an in-group seek to find negative aspects of an out-group; thus conflict and hatred result. Tajfel proposes that the social groups which people belong to ought to be an important source of pride and self-esteem. If an individual gets feeling of inferiority and degradation, he will resort to violence. Psychologically speaking frustration leads to violence i.e. when the individual cannot attack the source of frustration because of fear and weakness, he resorts to violence (Sears 43). The Frustration–Aggression Theory proposed by John Dollard, Neal Miller and Robert Sears in 1969 says that “aggression is the result of blocking or frustrating a person’s efforts to attain a goal” (Friedman 204). This theory also suggests that: “No aggression without frustration; there is a proportional relation between frustration and aggression i.e. more frustration leads to more aggression” (Bergmann 578). In brief, Social Identity Theory aims to specify and predict the circumstances under which individuals think of themselves as individuals or as group members.

The evaluation of individual’s group versus other groups may lead to individual’s attempts of self-improvement. If the person cannot achieve his goals, he can turn to violence, aggression and illegal methods. Tajfel and Turner illustrate this point: “If a person’s in-group seems inferior, then he ... could try to improve it somehow and/or attack the out-group in some way” (Tajfel and Turner, Social Identity Theory 55). This means that members of disadvantaged groups exert much effort for improvement of their group’s position and social standing and members of advantaged groups aim to protect and maintain their privileged position.

One strategy for self-improvement is individual mobility which “allows people to pursue individual position improvement irrespective of the group. It can also be an individual-level solution for overcoming group devaluation (Ellemers 4). In the strategy of individual mobility, when a person finds himself and his group in an inferior position, he attempts to leave his group and join another higher one. In Ahmed Zayed’s view, there are two substitutions or strategies for the weak groups in order to achieve change and harmony with the strong:

The first strategy is that the weak groups may wish to indulge with the dominating groups; and this indulgence requires drastic cultural and psychological change. The second strategy is that the weak group may resort to the direct comparison with the dominating group. This comparison leads to challenge and consequently conflict and disputes (Zayed 25-6).

The Image of the Rooster Coop within the Context of the Social Identity Theory

In order to study the image of the rooster coop in Arvind Adiga’s novel, *The White Tiger*, both psychological and social analysis, within the context of the Social Identity Theory, is required. Thus, by putting the world of the poor face to face with the world of the rich, Adiga makes the protagonist, Balram, resort to comparison between his inferior class of servants (the poor) and the other class of his masters (the rich). There are motives beyond this comparison. And according to the process of social comparison, these motives are represented in some desires the poor endeavor to achieve such as self-improvement, self-enhancement and altruism. Through social comparison “individuals endeavor to evaluate

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themselves, beliefs and opinions. The individual may say ‘I am efficient, I am right’ and consequently act and behave” (Festinger 125).

The central narrative of *The White Tiger* focuses on Balram Halwai’s transition from a small poor Indian village to the center of Bangalore city as a journey from the life of poverty and oppression to the life of freedom and wealth. The novel tells the story of Balram’s life as a “self-made entrepreneur”. Balram grows up in extreme poverty and deprivation; he is not allowed to complete his education and is employed as a child in a local tea stall. He is the man who climbs India’s social ladder to become a chauffeur and later a successful businessman. In his letters, Balram explains how he, the son of a puller, escaped a life of servitude to become a rich man, describing himself as an entrepreneur. He explains his condition as if he were in a rooster coop and the way he could get out free of this coop. He describes how India transferred from being an orderly “zoo” to being a “jungle” where only the law of jungle: eat or be eaten, dominates. Balram compares the Indian social system to a “rooster coop,” asserting that the poor Indians are like roosters in captivity, kept ready for butchering.

Balram’s first step in his ascending the social ladder is his being a driver to a rich man called Ashok with whom he moves to New Delhi. There, the contrast between the poor and the wealthy is made more evident by their proximity to one another. From the beginning it is clear that *The White Tiger* “studies the contrast between India’s rise as a modern global economy and the lead character, Balram, who comes from crushing rural poverty” (Robins 10). It is a story not only about the rise of a poor individual from poverty to wealth, but also about India’s development as a global market

economy. So, *The White Tiger* is seen as “an angry novel about injustice and power which creates merciless thugs among whom only the ruthless can survive” (Donahue).

All over the novel there is a reference to the difficult problems that exist in Indian society for the ordinary citizen. To explain the division of the Indian society, Balram uses the metaphor of the rooster coop. In his letters to the Chinese premier he illustrates the meaning of this metaphor:

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 colored roosters, stuffed tightly into wire-mesh cages. The roosters in the coop smell the blood from above. They see the 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. The very same thing is done with human beings in this country (*White Tiger* 174).

The poor realize that they are just roosters imprisoned in the coop until it is their turn to be slaughtered and eaten. They are trapped in the coop because they do not have the courage to rise up against their masters. Through this metaphor of the rooster coop, Balram refers to all aspects of political, social and economic injustice in India. He shows how he lives in a world of two extremities: the downtrodden poor and the selfish and fraudulent rich.

Adiga depicts two Indias: ‘India of darkness’ and ‘India of light’. Such depiction contrasts the usual associations of “Light” with virtue, and “Darkness” with immorality. India of Light is not virtuous at all. Rather, its members are corrupt and do whatever necessary to preserve their own wealth and power even it is against morality. The image of “Light”

primarily comes in the sense that the rich live in the “light” of wealth and luxury. But the image of “Darkness” refers to the dullness and suffering of poverty. Balram’s vision of two Indias forms the central image around which the novel is organized. He explains, “Please understand, Your Excellency, that India is two countries in one: an India of Light, and an India of Darkness” (*White Tiger* 12). Both poverty and wealth are seen in people’s appearance as it is portrayed by Adiga at the tongue Balram:

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

This physical description illustrates the difference between both Indias; one is luxurious whereas the other is characterized by suffering. Juxtaposing wealth and poverty as “Light” and “Darkness”, the novelist illustrates that in Indian society both castes are unable to coexist. In their relationship with each other the extremely wealthy people of Light India oppress the extremely poor people of Dark India to such a degree that those in the Darkness are not even conscious of their own oppression.

When Balram was working in a tea shop, he describes the bad conditions of the poor people around him saying it is better “to call them human spiders that go crawling in between and under the tables with rags in their hands, crushed humans

in crushed uniforms, sluggish, unshaven, in their thirties or forties or fifties but still ‘boys’ (*White Tiger* 51). When he was in a shopping mall with his master, he remembers one of the newspaper reports on the malls entitled ‘Is there No Space for the Poor in the Malls of new India?’ (*White Tiger* 148). The security guards at these shopping malls identified the poor wearing sandals and do not allow them to enter the mall but they let in only those wearing shoes. When a poor man in sandals was driven out, he bursts angrily: ‘Am I not a human being too?’ (*White Tiger* 148).

To present the image of the rooster coop Adiga offers two symbols of both India of light and India of darkness. The India of Light is represented by politicians, businessmen and entrepreneurs who prosper financially and sit at the top of society. Mr. Ashok is an example figure of India of light as he is very rich, educated, and a very important figure in the New India. The India of Darkness is symbolized by Balram who is very poor, marginalized and less educated. According to Adiga those who live in the darkness are imprisoned inside the coop whereas those who live in the light are free outside the coop. This contrast is emphasized by Balram when Mr. Ashok sees him for the first time:

He looked me up and down, from head to toe, the way I had been looking at him ever since I had come to the house. His eyes seemed full of wonder: how could two such contrasting specimens of humanity be produced by the same soil, sunlight, and water? (*White Tiger* 68)

In their relationship with each other, Balram finds that the rich expect their domesticated animals to be treated like humans: “They expect their dogs to be pampered, walked, petted, and even washed” (*White Tiger* 67). At the same time the wealthy treat their servants like animals. This is

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elaborately illustrated when Balram takes the dogs of a rich man for a walk: “Then I took them around the compound on 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!” (*White Tiger* 67).

This severe contrast between the poor and the wealthy resulted in the system of servitude or master-servant relationship which is an integral part of the Indian society. Raka Ray and Seemin Qayum in *Cultures of Servitude* define servitude as the state of being submissive and under control of someone who is more powerful (Ray & Qayum). Adiga sees that the permanence of the system of servitude is based on the truthfulness of the servants: “Masters trust their servants with diamonds in this country! . . . Why doesn't that servant take the suitcase full of diamonds? He's no Gandhi, he's human, he's you and me. But he's in the Rooster Coop” (*White Tiger* 149). The truthfulness of the poor comes as a result of the rooster coop logic that prevails over dark India. Balram comments on the system of servitude in Indian society:

A handful of men in this country have trained the remaining 99.9% to exist in perpetual servitude; a servitude so strong that you can put the key of emancipation in a man's hands and he will throw it back at you with a curse (*White Tiger* 268).

This system of servitude is depicted in the metaphor of the “rooster coop” which prevents servants from escaping from their masters. The poor people in India are shown to be living under the mercy of feudal landlords in a vile and mean manner as described by Adiga: “if you wanted to work on those lands, you had to bow down to his feet, and touch the dust under his slippers” (*White Tiger* 21). In an interview with Hirsh Sawhney, Adiga was asked: “Has India's rich-poor divide

actually led to an outbreak of crime between servants and masters?" Adiga answers:

The servant-master system implies two things: One is that the servants are far poorer than the rich—a servant has no possibility of ever catching up to the master. And secondly, he has access to the master—the master's money, the master's physical person (Sawhney 3).

The ill treatment of the servants from their masters is further illustrated when Mukesh – Ashok's father - insults Balram for not being able to find a rupee coin he loses while getting out of the car. Mukesh has just bribed someone with half a million rupees, and so the loss of a rupee is not an important matter. It is about mistrust of Balram and the fear that if he is capable of stealing one rupee, he may also steal millions. So Balram was humiliated by Mukesh: "Get down on your knees. Look for it on the floor of the car.' I got down on my knees. I sniffed in between the mats like a dog, all in search of that one rupee" (*White Tiger* 139).

Another event that shows humiliation of servants at the hands of their masters is clear when Balram was humiliated and blackmailed by Ashok whose wife Pinky Madam kills someone by her car while drunken. Ashok put the blame of the murder on Balram and forced him to sign a statement accepting full responsibility for the accident. Ashok also asked his lawyer to bribe the judge. The statement of false confession reads as follows:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

I, Balram Halwai, son of Vikram Halwai, of Laxmangarh village in the district of Gaya, do make the following statement of my own free will and intention: That I drove the car that hit an unidentified person, or persons, or person and objects, on the night of January 23rd of this year ... I swear by almighty God that I make this statement under no duress and under instruction from no one (*White Tiger* 168).

This incident shows us the way in which the poor workers can be blackmailed and exploited. Balram did not protest or express opposition to his master Ashok because he was too weak to challenge or object. He blindly confesses to a crime he never committed:

I had to go to jail for a killing I had not done. I was in terror, and yet not once did the thought of running away cross my mind. Not once did the thought, I'll tell the judge the truth, cross my mind. I was trapped in the Rooster Coop (*White Tiger* 177).

The rooster coop is Balram's choice for describing the oppression of India's poor. Roosters in a coop at the market watch one another slaughtered one by one, but are unable or unwilling to rebel and break out of the coop. Similarly, India's poor people see one another crushed by the wealthy and powerful, defeated by inequality and injustice of Indian society but are unable to escape the same fate. So, the rooster coop represents the prison in which the poor people are trapped. Balram describes the rooster coop as one that's "guarded from the inside." This type of environment forces Balram to give up his good nature for an immoral one. Adiga sees that to succeed in India, one must be corrupt.

All over the narrative, as Balram becomes increasingly aware of the corrupt forces that maintain oppression and inequality, he develops the metaphor of the rooster coop: a system in which oppression of the poor is so complete that the oppressed are satisfied with their own subjugation and enslavement. All the time Balram talks about how he lives in a rooster coop and how he tries to break free from this coop. Adiga compares those chickens living in a miserable condition with the poor class in India. So, the rooster coop is a key metaphor in the novel. The comparison of the poor's life to a rooster coop is incredibly purposeful in that it conveys the real nature of the Indian social system, and the feeling of self-satisfaction it creates in the servants who are like "chickens," caught within the coop. Balram is caged like a rooster in a coop. He decides to turn from a rooster to a white tiger and to break out of the cage to freedom. By using the image of the rooster coop to symbolize the India of Darkness, Adiga uses inhuman characteristics to people.

The image of the rooster coop is represented mentally and psychologically which means that the poor servants are kept in a mental and psychological coop by their masters. The coop represents life where the poor people do not have options concerning their lives. They live in the coop of servitude and poverty where their families are exposed to humiliation and killing around them and are unable to intervene.

The upper-class wealthy people of the 'Light India' are so corrupt and oppressive that corruption becomes a usual matter in Indian life. This makes the lower-class people of the 'Dark India' unconscious of their own oppression. No one can expect a rebellion or a revolution to happen as shown by Balram to his master: "An Indian revolution? No, sir. It won't happen. People of this country are still waiting for their war of

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freedom to come from somewhere else ... That will never happen (*White Tiger* 304). On the other hand, the life of the poor is characterized by mystery and misunderstanding. When Balram said that his parents had no time to name him, the reader is presented with a truly harsh and shocking image of people whose lives are devoid of meaning and responsibility. In a society like that survival is the only goal of people.

The idea of the rooster coop may be the cause of keeping Balram away from discovering his own abilities in life until finally he grew up and realized that he could leave the coop. The poor people of India cannot realize that they are in a rooster coop because they lack social and mental consciousness. To support this idea Adiga depicts several events all over the narrative to condemn the oppression and hopelessness endured by the lower classes. Balram talks about what was happening during his schooldays when he knows that school teacher steals lunch money and school uniform of children:

There was supposed to be free food at my school— a government program gave every boy three rotis, yellow daal, and pickles at lunchtime. But we never saw rotis, or yellow daal, or pickles, and everyone knew why: the school teacher had stolen our lunch money [...] Once, a truck came into the school with uniforms that the government had sent for us; we never saw them, but a week later they turned up for sale in the neighboring village (*White Tiger* 32-33).

At the same time in Balram’s mind “the teacher had a legitimate excuse to steal the money” because “he hadn’t been paid his salary in six months” (*White Tiger* 33). It seems that *The White Tiger* is a realistic novel identifying and reflecting social and economic issues of the Indian society. Through the

psycho-social narrative, the novelist presents the gloomy and dull picture of the rural life at the protagonist's native town, Laxmangarh. So, this novel can be half fiction half true. It talks about the fortunate and the unfortunate, the rich and the poor.

In this novel there is an abundance of corruption in all institutions of India. The reason for this corruption is an absence of law enforcement. Police officers are bribed and disregard the law. Adiga argues that entrepreneurs in India can only become successful by breaking the law, and that this fact justifies their criminal activity. Adiga illustrates the reason beyond the choice of his theme of poverty in India saying:

At a time when India is going through great changes and, with China, is likely to inherit the world from the west, it is important that writers like me try to highlight the brutal injustices of society. That's what writers like Flaubert, Balzac and Dickens did in the 19th century and, as a result, England and France are better societies. That's what I'm trying to do – it's not an attack on the country, it's about the greater process of self-examination (Jeffries, "Roars of anger").

Corruption spreads among the rich as well as the poor. An example of the rich people is Ashok who confesses to Balram about his dirty life saying: "My way of living is all wrong, Balram. I know it, but I don't have the courage to change it." (*White Tiger* 237-8). Prostitution prevails among the people. The women are forced into sexual slavery and there are red light areas in many cities in India such as Mumbai, Delhi and Bangalore. Even women are priced. The person demands them on the basis of "high class or low class and virgin or non-

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virgin”. The aristocratic peoples always need “golden haired women” (Arul 65).

Born in the India of darkness, Balram begins to think of escape from the rooster coop that symbolizes the permanent prison for the poor. He goes through a gradual transformation from a poor kind-hearted boy to a wild animal, the white tiger. First, he left his school and worked in a tea shop for little wage. Second, he got a job as a driver for a rich man. But he realizes that this job does not suit his abilities; he needs more money. So, he begins to seek a life in the light, a life of freedom and financial prosperity. He thinks of a new self-identification even if he sacrifices his family. He has a faith in his ability thinking of himself as a white tiger; he thinks not to be restricted by moral code or social conventions of his society. A white tiger symbolizes power in East Asian Cultures as we used to hear about ‘Asian Tigers’ on the level of countries like Singapore, Malaysia, China and Japan. He is so overambitious that he is ready to commit murder to achieve his wishes of freedom and opulence. At the same time, he finds justification for his hostile thoughts: “All I wanted was the chance to be a man—and for that, one murder was enough” (*White Tiger* 192). By murdering his master Ashok, Balram becomes his own man, free of the chains of servitude and finally able to control his own destiny.

While he was in Delhi, Balram experiences the two kinds of India with those who eat and those who are eaten, the predators and the prey. Therefore, he decides to be an eater and predator: “he wants to be an eater, someone with a big belly, and the novel tracks the way in which this ambition plays out” (Puja 6). Balram wants to be transformed from a rooster in the coop to a free white tiger outside the coop.

Thus, to escape the rooster coop, and enter the ‘Light’, Balram is forced to change his morality because he feels debased and humiliated as a human being especially when he is 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. If he walked into the mall someone would say “*That man is a paid driver! What’s he doing in here?*” There were guards in grey uniforms on every floor - all of them seemed to be watching me. It was my first taste of the fugitive’s life” (*White Tiger* 152).

In a moment of consciousness and meditation, Balram accumulated his past experiences of oppression, poverty and corruption and finds himself between two choices: either to submit to servitude that society had destined for him, or to break out of the coop and set out to the world of freedom and wealth. Psychologically and mentally puzzled between the choices, he does not want to live in the coop forever. Therefore, he turns a rebel to achieve a new identity even if that includes murder and theft. Instead of being imprisoned in the rooster coop, Balram takes the responsibility for his own self and decides to break free of the coop. He does not depend on others to help him, nor does he take responsibility to help others. He thinks of his future and how to achieve his own ambitions — even if that means committing crimes. Balram has the courage, intention and will to change his life. The poor oppressed people like Balram can escape from the coop when there is a will: “they are roosters guarding the coop, aware they’re for the chop, yet unwilling to escape. Ultimately, the tiger refuses to stay caged. Balram’s violent bid for freedom is shocking” (Turpin).

Balram comes to believe that to create a better life and “break out of the Rooster Coop,” he should have a will to

sacrifice everything, including his adherence to the rules of good versus evil and even his family. He prefers wealth and power to morals in order to escape the oppression of a corrupt society. His escape from poverty results in a belief that the end justifies the means. For self-liberation, he believes that he must achieve power identical to his masters. He must get rid of his past identity to have a new one. In his essay “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” Homi Bhabha shows that a repressed self

employs mimicry as a powerful tool for liberation from the domination imposed upon him by an intimidating other. Thus, imitation becomes a form of subversion founded on the undecidability that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention (Bhabha, “Mimicry and Man” 122).

So, in order for Balram to get out of the coop, he turned into a “mimic” man for “liberation from the dominance imposed upon him” (Yazdiha 32).

Balram prepares himself seriously to get out of “darkness” to the live in the “light”. Following Balram’s transformation from a poor villager to a rich successful businessman, Adiga uses symbolic elements to emphasize the capacity of individuals to forge their own identity. From an early age Balram’s father implants in him the idea of breaking away from the “darkness” and of becoming his own man. The father instills in his son Balram the goal of becoming one of those men who are in the light saying: “My whole life, I have been treated like a donkey. All I want is that one son of mine—at least one—should live like a man” (*The White Tiger* 26). In the eyes of Balram’s father, a man should live in the light, free from the cruel and poor life of manual hard labour and

servitude. Balram adopts this goal and devotes his life towards attaining it. Later, he uses the metaphor: “There are just two castes: Men with Big Bellies, and Men with Small Bellies. And only two destinies: eat—or get eaten up” (*The White Tiger* 54). Readers may admire Balram not due to his actions, but due to his extraordinary efforts to rid himself of the iron bars of the “zoo” to the life of freedom and weath.

It appears that Balram suffers from psychological and social conflicts because he still “suffers a loss of both identity and insight” (Laing 37). This causes him not to think well. What he thinks of is to escape from the rooster coop especially he is a witness to all of Ashoke’s corrupt practices and gambling with money to bribe politicians. He decides to steal and kill. Adiga delves deep into Balram’s subconscious mind as he plans to plunder 700,000 rupees stuffed into Ashok’s red bag:

Go on, just look at the red bag, Balram – that’s not stealing, is it? I shook my head. And even you were to steal it, Balram, it wouldn’t be stealing. How so? I looked at the creature in the mirror. 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! (*White Tiger* 244).

Balram then decides that killing Ashok and stealing his money will be the only way to escape Poverty. After hitting Ashok with a broken bottle and stealing him, he moves to Bangalore the big city, where he bribes the police in order to help start his own taxi business. His obsession with his master Ashok causes him to mimic the superior other; and mimicry “is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other” (Bhabha, *Location of Culture* 86). Thus, Balram’s sarcastic ego motivates him to

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acquire power identical to his master’s for the sake of his freedom.

Balram mimics his master’s brutality because there is no other way of getting out of the ‘rooster coop’ rather than mimicry. The reasons for his aggression and violence are frustration and psychological devastation that push him to seek for the change of his identity. Balram’s change of identity is attributed to his corrupt master’s influence on him:

All these changes happened to me because they happened first in Mr. Ashok. He returned from America, an innocent man, but life in Delhi corrupted him—and once the master of the Honda City becomes corrupted, how can the driver stay innocent? (*White Tiger* 197).

In this way, in the company of his corrupt master, Balram has turned corrupt too. In his article “Hate, Projective Identification, and the Psychotherapist’s Struggle,” Robert Waska says that there is a “relationship between projective identification and aggression”:

The relationship between projective identification and aggression is explored through case material in which the psychotherapist felt strongly influenced by the patient’s projections. Through a variety of interpersonal and intrapsychic dynamics, the patient evoked an unconscious and conscious sense of hate in the psychotherapist that emerged in a countertransference dream (Waska 33).

Throughout his life Balram attempts to advocate himself and fight for his own advancement. His attempts to move from a rooster in a coop to a white tiger succeeded. When he was

born, his family did not name him; he was named as “Munna,” meaning ‘boy’. He didn’t have another name until his schoolteacher called him Balram. This naming is significant and expressive because it means “a cool guy who gets everything he wants” (Urban Dictionary). Neither Balram’s father nor his mother is concerned about his name. This is the condition of the poor people whose young boys are given no proper names. In his talk with his school teacher Balram illustrates how he was not given a name:

I’d never been given a name.
‘Didn’t your mother name you?’
‘She’s very ill, sir, she lies in bed and spews blood.
She’s got no time to name me’ (*White Tiger* 10).

It is the same teacher who called Balram a ‘white tiger’ for his rare intelligence when he said to him:

‘You, young man, are an intelligent, honest, vivacious fellow in this crowd of thugs and idiots. In any jungle, what is the rarest of animals—the creature that comes along only once in a generation?’
‘The white tiger.’
‘That’s what you are, in *this* jungle’ (*White Tiger* 30).

In spite of his intelligence, the miserable and poor conditions prevent Balram from completing his education, particularly after the death of his father. He is forced to leave school to sustain himself and his family and settle some debts.

After being called ‘white tiger’ by his teacher, Balram develops his own individual moral framework established on his sense of himself as a “white tiger”: a rare strong creature with superior intelligence that lives in the jungle. His adoption of the idea that he is special and rare gives him the justification

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to be outside the legal and moral codes by killing his master Ashok. When Balram goes to the zoo to see the real white tiger, he finds it trapped in a cage and realizes that he sees himself:

He [The tiger] was walking in the same line, again and again—from one end of the bamboo bars to the other, then running around and repeating it over, at exactly the same pace, like a thing under a spell. He was hypnotizing himself by walking like this—that was the only way he could tolerate this cage. ... All at once, the tiger vanished (*White Tiger* 237).

On seeing the real white tiger, Balram confronts a physical manifestation of his inner self. The moment occurs during the psychological upheaval that precedes the murder.

In the poor corrupt India human beings are treated like animals, which is clear in the novelist’s employment of animal metaphors to describe the miserable conditions of these dehumanized marginalized people, like ‘spiders,’ ‘monkeys,’ ‘roosters,’ ‘tigers’ and ‘dogs.’ Therefore, living among them, Balram perceives himself as an animal and India is a big zoo. So, he identifies himself with a caged tiger.

Balram begins to think of reversing the animal imagery for his benefit. His ultimate decision to assert his power over his master Ashok becomes inevitable. Before murdering his master, Balram wrote a letter to his grandmother apologizing in advance, and explaining that he cannot endure living in a coop any longer. He decides to commit the murder because it will move him to the new life he has dreamed of. Life is not worth living if it is lived in a dark coop. He kills Ashok, steals his money and begins his new business as a successful entrepreneur. By committing his crime, Balram quickly and deliberately frees himself from the coop of poverty. Through

murder, Balram seeks his freedom and a new identity in the India of light. After killing Ashok, he said, “I’ve made it! I’ve broken out of the coop!” (*White Tiger* 275). The moment of the murder described in detail by Adiga. Balram slaughters Ashok like a chicken. This description reinforces the image of the rooster whose blood flows during slaughter:

[Ashok] opened his eyes – just as I pierced his neck – and his lifeblood spurted into my eyes. I was blind. I was a free man. When I got the blood out of my eyes, it was all over for Mr. Ashok. The blood was draining from the neck quite fast – I believe that is the way the Muslims kill their chickens (*White Tiger* 285).

To interpret Balram’s aggressive behaviour of killing his master Ashok, it is appropriate to refer to the Frustration–aggression hypothesis which states that: “frustration always precedes aggression, and aggression is the sure consequence of frustration” (Dollard). In his book *Hostility and Aggression* Dolf Zillmann, sees that “any aggressive behavior is the result of frustration” (Zillmann 126).

Balram now is in the India of light. Now he leads a life in which he can choose his own fate. Freedom from servitude requires only awareness and consciousness, and that is summed up in Balram’s words: “I was looking for the key for years. But the door was always open” (*White Tiger* 228). It is the key of freedom, justice, equality, and emancipation from servitude, which is hidden by man's ignorance and lack of courage. He justifies that the money he steals from Ashok is rightfully his since servants are exploited by the rich. Balram’s breakout from the rooster coop is not an easy transition, but a revolutionary one, implying that those downtrodden people in the India of darkness will not be silenced forever. It is also Adiga’s symbolic message to the Indian society that if the poor

are not given equal position in the new globalized India, they will enforce the law of jungle, establishing a place for themselves, exactly as Balram does.

By killing Ashok, Balram is motivated by self-improvement and this motivation is important in determining his behavior. Balram frequently discusses the issues of social mobility in the new social hierarchy of India. He ultimately finds a way to break out of the rooster coop. According to the social identity theory, when a person attempts to achieve self-improvement, he can select one of three strategies: individual mobility, social competition or social creativity. From these three Balram select the first one because he cannot achieve his goal of improving his in-group. His failure of achieving success on the level of group makes him turn to violence, aggression and illegal methods as it is illustrated by Tajfel and Turner: “If a person’s in-group seems inferior, then he ... could try to improve it somehow and/or attack the out-group in some way” (Tajfel and Turner, “Social Identity Theory” 55). And according to Ellemers, individual mobility allows Balram “to pursue individual position improvement irrespective of the group. It can also be an individual-level solution for overcoming group devaluation” (Ellemers 4).

In his new position of consciousness Balram sees himself as a separate independent identity far away from his family and his poor caste because, according to him, he is awake and they are asleep: “I have woken up, and the rest of you are still sleeping, and that is the only difference between us. I shouldn’t think of them at all. My family” (*White Tiger* 315). He considers his relationship with his family a misconception because he wants to set himself free from anything that can remind him of his past suffering even if his freedom costs him

the loss of his family. Balram's philosophy of social mobility is criticized because it comes at the expense of his family:

[Balram's] philosophy of social mobility based on productive commercial investments embraces, to begin with, a breach of family duty. In his avidity to rise, family bonds, family allegiance and family obligation cease to have any meaning for Balram now (Want 75).

Balram neglects his family and sacrifices them for his self-independence and new identity as a businessman.

The change in Balram's attitude towards integrity now becomes clear as he moves from "Darkness" to "Light". From a servant to a tea shop waiter then a businessman, Balram continues his journey from poverty to riches and succeeds in creating a wealthy taxi company. This means that Balram takes advantage of the opportunities available to him and becomes a part of a corrupt system through which he could raise his social mobility. Since he was a child at school, Balram dedicated himself to self-improvement. Over the course of the narrative, he adopts a new name each time he moves up within India's social hierarchy. He could transform from 'Munna' to Balram to 'White Tiger' to 'Country-Mouse' and, finally, to 'Ashok Sharma'. By calling himself Ashok Sharma, Balram chooses a new identity for himself . This choice is based on mimicry of his master; it is also symbolic of his replacement of Mr. Ashok in the Light. Feeling proud of his new identity, Balram says:

Yes, Ashok! That's what I call myself these days. Ashok Sharma, North Indian entrepreneur, settled in Bangalore... I would show you all the secrets of my business...my drivers, my garages, my mechanics, and

my paid-off policemen. All of them belong to me
(*White Tiger* 302).

By taking the name of his murdered master Ashok Sharma, Balram comes face to face with the police department to accomplish his objective that is to gain his White Tiger Drivers Company job. To do so, he bribes the police officer who helps him in various issues. Because of the corruption throughout the police department, he was able to help himself and his company from failure.

Throughout the novel Adiga argues that rich businessmen in India can only become successful by breaking the law. From the narrative one can deduce that India is a world in which rising to the top is accompanied by indifference and immorality. Balram’s own experience of cruelty at the hands of his masters seems not to contribute to his sense of compassion, but rather to his desire to revenge and become a master himself. By highlighting Balram’s transformation from villager to wealthy businessman, Adiga succeeds in shaping Balram’s identity through symbolism.

Balram’s crisis of identity can be understood and analyzed in terms of the theory of psychological personality development proposed by psychoanalyst Erik Erikson. With reference to this theory Balram has to take on several identities according to the stages of his life. Erikson’s point of view is that “each stage of life, from infancy and early childhood on, is associated with a specific psychological struggle that contributes to a major aspect of personality” (Erikson 265). Erikson sees that “adolescents explore their independence and develop a sense of self between the ages of approximately of 12 to 18” (265). This stage in Balram’s life is vital for his identity development and well-being as an individual. Erikson suggests

that “the ego and the sense of identity are shaped over the entire life” (267).

All over the narrative, Adiga demonstrates the complete lack of morals within modern India. He puts down a fact that there are only two divisions or destinies within the Indian society: “You either eat or get eaten up”. This principle is made by emphasizing that the only way to be “treated like a man,” is to escape the cycle of servitude and to be a “monster” completely lacking in morals. Balram claims to be different from Mr. Ashok but his actions suggest that he is a photocopy of Ashok in his immorality:

Once I was a driver to a master, but now I am a master of drivers. ... They’re my employees; I’m their boss, 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. A White Tiger keeps no friends. It’s too dangerous (*White Tiger* 302).

Balram’s lack of morals arouses feelings of disgust and contempt within readers. He urges his drivers to imitate him by becoming white tigers if they wish to succeed in life. At the end of the novel, Adiga emphasizes the image of the rooster coop by explaining how the poor can break out of the Coop:

I think the Rooster Coop needs people like me to break out of it. It needs masters like Mr. Ashok – who, for all his numerous virtues, was not much of a master – to be weeded out, and exceptional servants like me to replace them. ...I’ll never say I made a mistake that night in

Delhi when I slit my master’s throat (*White Tiger* 320-21).

Throughout his behavior all over the novel, Balram is portrayed as a psychopath who selects a course of action that depends on opportunism. Several symptoms of the psychopathy are found in Balram who is characterized by cold-blooded mode of reasoning that enables him to commit acts that most people reject. Jennifer Copley points out that “This cold-blooded mode of reasoning enables the psychopath to commit acts that most people’s consciences would not allow” (Copley). He is depicted as a psychopathic character because he is characterized by the symptoms of psychopathy:

Psychopaths aren’t capable of feeling any genuine remorse. They don’t accept any responsibility for hurting other people’s feelings... They often lie, cheat, and steal to get ahead... They don’t experience genuine emotions toward others (Morin).

Psychopaths are also known as sociopaths who are manipulative, deceitful, impulsive, lacking self-restraint and inclined to take risks:

The psychopath believes that rules and morals are for other, weaker people who obey because they fear punishment. ... Psychopathy involves poor emotional intelligence, the lack of conscience, and an inability to feel attached to people except in terms of their value as a source of stimulation or new possessions” (Solo 1 & Hendrie 2).

Balram justifies his immoral acts of lying, murder and stealing as acts of class warfare in the post-globalized India. Balram develops his own personal identity founded on his

sense of himself as a “white tiger”: a rare creature with superior intelligence who lives in the jungle but is exempt from its rules. He adopts the idea that he is special and therefore deserves to exist outside legal and moral codes of his society. Adiga sees that Balram’s crimes of murder, theft and destroying his family are criminal actions since he is a product of a corrupt system. In an interview with *The Independent* when Adiga was asked: “What do you think is a greater threat to India: terrorism or corruption?” His answer shows that terrorism is one of the consequences of corruption:

The two are linked. A corrupt system that fails to provide justice or to reduce poverty is one of the causes of terrorism. Reducing corruption, and increasing the trust that citizens have in the country’s political and judicial systems, will strike at the very root of terrorism (Adiga, *Independent*). A question from Julian Bolton, England)

The Image of the Rooster Coop within the Context of Post-Globalization

The image of the rooster coop can be delineated in terms of post-globalization era because Adiga delineates the economic, political and socio-cultural effects of globalization on the Indian society. Critics and reviewers of works of literature observe various reflections of post-globalization themes within the texts. They find that literature and literary studies delineate different social, literary, cultural, and political concepts within the post-globalization realm. The Indian scholar Richa Sharma observes the impact of globalization on Indian novel as follows:

The contemporary Indian novel in English has now moved to capture the new tremors caused by the overwhelming influx of the global capital and policies of free trade after 1991, which are restructuring every aspect of the Indian life with increasing intensity. The drastic economic changes and policies brought about by the globalization in India have created two countries: the India of Light and the India of Darkness (Sharma 8).

In his book: *The Levelling: What's Next After Globalization* (2019), Michael O'Sullivan wrote about the post-globalization era. In this book he said that globalization is dead and a new era began in the early years of the 21st century, He said that the first period of globalization collapsed in 1913 and the second period collapsed in 1989. The third era of globalization [post-globalization] began in 1990s up till now. O'Sullivan's view is based on the appearance of a new “multipolar world”:

the evolution of a new world order—a fully multipolar world composed of three (perhaps four, depending on how India develops) large regions that are distinct in the workings of their economies, laws, cultures, and security networks—is manifestly underway (O'Sullivan, *The Levelling* 185).

O'Sullivan calls post-globalization as “multipolarity”. He mentions four poles in the era: “the European Union, the United States, China, and potentially India are poles” (O'Sullivan, *The Levelling* 189).

In an interview with *The Economist Journal*, O'Sullivan declares: “Globalization is already behind us. We should say goodbye to it and set our minds on the emerging multipolar

world” (O’Sullivan, “What killed globalization?”) When he was asked: “what does the world you foresee look like after globalization?”, his reply was as follows:

This will be dominated by at least three large regions: America, the European Union and a China-centric Asia. They will increasingly take very different approaches to economic policy, liberty, warfare, technology and society (O’Sullivan, “What killed globalization?”).

Various critics see that post-globalization must be characterized by democracy in all fields of life especially political and economic democracy. In their book *Globalization Theory: Approaches and Controversies* (2007), Anthony McGrew and David Held see that post-globalization means that “the world has entered a new epoch, an epoch which requires more than a change in the economic policy paradigm (McGrew and Held 126).

Throughout the events of the novel it appears that Balram’s motives, crimes, behaviors, ambitions and rise in social hierarchy are interpreted and understood within the context of political, economic and socio-cultural systems and can be seen as prime examples of the changes occurring in post-globalization India. So, most critics see that *The White Tiger* can be read as a critique of post-globalization India and particularly the great contrast in income between the poor and the rich that global capitalism has created in India. Within the context of post-globalization there should be integration among countries of the world and consequently among the poor and the rich in one country like India, but this integration has never happened. Herman Daly sees that one of the aspects of post-globalization is: “complying to global standards in economy, politics, culture, education, environment or other

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matters. It describes the way countries and people of the world interact and integrate” (Daly 31). If globalization refers to the emergence of an international network of economic systems, this means that post-globalization must promote the world economy. Frank Lechner defines globalization as “a process in which more and more people become connected in more different ways across larger distances” (Lechner 15). Justin Ervin and Alden Smith Zachary see that globalization also implies a shrinking of the world in terms of space and time, since it “increases the ‘thickness’ of human interaction and the impact this interaction has on the earth itself” (Ervin & Zachary 2). Therefore, post-globalization must have the advantage of developing various ways of increasing human interaction all over the world.

It is supposed that in the post-globalization era the gap between the poor and the rich should be narrow as a result of the encouragement of the liberal free market. From an economic and social point of view, Beverly Bird and Carol Kopp see that post-globalization “can raise the standard of living in poor and less developed countries by providing job opportunity, modernization, and improved access to goods and services” (Bird 1). But the matter is completely different in India. The impact of these economic changes on India is examined accurately in Aravind Adiga’s *The White Tiger*. The novel distinguishes between India’s development as a modern global economic giant represented in Ashok and his class and the dark poor India represented in Balram and his class.

***The White Tiger* depicts class struggle in India at a time of modernization and post-globalization represented in the existence of Americanization in India in the character of Ashok and his wife the American Pinky Madam. Adiga criticizes “the socioeconomic conditions promoted by a**

ruthless form of neoliberal globalization which privileges profit over people” (Khor 43). The novelist aims to shed light on the bitter fact that an economic policy of post-globalization can widen the gap between the rich and the poor by giving a small minority a chance to flourish and rise at the expense of the majority. This wide gap makes the novelist use the image of the rooster coop to express how far the poor live in a narrow cage compared to the wide world outside the coop. Within this context, *The White Tiger* can be seen as a realistic depiction of the brutal class struggle between the upper and lower classes and the gap between them, which is shown to be widened and intensified after globalization. About the reality of the Indian society and the wide gap between the poor and the rich, Adiga says:

5% of people in my country who are doing well. ... In northern India politics is so corrupt that it makes a mockery of democracy. This is a country where the poor fear tuberculosis, which kills 1,000 Indians a day (Jeffries, “India's dark side”).

In the post-globalization era India was influenced negatively since it opened up its markets in the last decade of the 20th century. In his book, *Globalization and poverty* (2006) Ann Harrison sees that “India liberalized its international trade as part of a major set of reforms in response to a severe balance of payments crisis in 1991” (Harrison 299). It is supposed that economic policy after globalization led to an increase in direct foreign investment and to a growing number of Indians working for global enterprises. The change brought up after globalization raised the standard of living of the Indian rich. It has facilitated the growth of information technology and the development of new cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, and Bangalore.

In post-globalization India, there is a promotion in industry and negligence in agriculture. The interest in industry rather than agriculture led to the marginalization of India's population inhabiting rural villages. The farming sector is “thrown up in the name of Special Economic Zones to multinationals and to agricultural big business” (Deb 4). In this regard, Arundhati Roy says that “In a country like India, 70% of the population lives in rural areas. That is 700 million people. Their lives depend directly on access to natural resources” (Roy 43). So, in the post-globalization age there are negative effects on Indian culture, such as marriage, family life, social mobility and the caste system. These symptoms appear in *The White Tiger* through which the novelist portrays Indian society as changing due to post-globalization and the rural India that is not able to cope with this change. The poor class finds itself trapped, deprived, neglected and at the verge of revolt. Balram, the downtrodden protagonist of the novel, revolts as a result of cultural encounter with the globalized India represented in his master Ashok. He defied all social and economic conventions of India in order to improve his economic and social position.

Balram recognizes and hopes to ride the wave of post-globalization by establishing his company of White Tiger Technology Drivers. Although his taxi service is not an international business, Balram plans to keep up with the pace of post-globalization and change his trade when necessary: “I'm always a man who sees ‘tomorrow’ when others see ‘today’” (*White Tiger* 274). Balram is negatively affected by the post-globalized India; however, he plans to escape the restraints by sacrificing his morals and justifying his actions with the belief that economic success is more important.

Adiga's goal of writing *The White Tiger* was to express the unspoken voice of poor people. He sees that the voice of the poor cannot be reached: "I wanted to do so without sentimentality or portraying them as mirthless humorless weaklings as they are usually" (Young 1). The novelist aims to illustrate the injustice and oppression occurring in India as he said: "At a time when India is going through great changes and is likely to inherit the world from the west, it is important that writers like me try to highlight the brutal injustices of society... the great divide" (Raaj 9). Some statistics of United Nations Organization show how poverty influences the rise of India:

Four in every 10 Indian children are malnourished according to a UN report. India Ranks a lowly 66 out of 88 countries in the Global Hunger Index 2008. The report says India has more hungry people – more than 200 million – than any other country in the world. One third of the world's poor live in India, according to the latest poverty estimates from the World Bank. Based on its new threshold of poverty - \$ 1.25 a day – the number of poor people has gone up from 421 million in 1981 to 456 million in 2005 (Raaj 9 & Singh xvii, xviii).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the image of the rooster coop is expressive and meaningful in depicting poverty, servitude and corruption in Aravind Adiga's novel *The White Tiger*. In the early part of his life, Balram is portrayed as a rooster in a coop; and in the later part he gets out of the coop to lead the life of freedom. Throughout the novel, Adiga depicts two Indias: India of darkness and India of light. People living in Dark India are

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imprisoned in a coop like helpless roosters at the market watching one another slaughtered one by one but they are unable or unwilling to rebel and break out of the coop. The novel is analyzed in terms of the Theory of Social Identity and Self-Categorization by Henri Tajfel and John Turner. The steps and procedures of this theory suit Balram’s gradual advancement in social hierarchy. Balram’s movement from poverty to riches is achieved in terms of the political, social and economic conditions of post-globalized India. Although Balram achieved self-improvement in social hierarchy by means of immoral acts like lying, killing and stealing, he is never punished because both policemen and judges are bribed. Adiga succeeded in depicting the image of the rooster coop within the context of the post-globalization era. *The White Tiger* is a good example in criticizing post-globalization India by which Balram is negatively affected.

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