

LOST INDIVIDUALITY IN MARGINALISATION IN ARAVIND ADIGA'S *THE WHITE TIGER*

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Abstract:

Literature is an illustration of life. It depicts the real-life experiences and incidents in a tactful manner. The realistic issues of social life are what gives literature a solid foundation of themes and fascination.

The present paper aims to reflect on the concept of class divide that works as a responsible factor in disrupting the so called 'unity' of our society. Equality seems to be lost somewhere in the long-lasting battle of classes. Though our constitution has provided us all the fundamental rights, still we get to see at many places the right of equality is deprived from many people. Reflection of these are found in literature also under the terminology of Subaltern, marginalised, proletariat, patriarchy and so on. In the paper, my aim is to bring out the inhuman treatment done to the financially lower class people in the name of class division.

Keywords: marginalization, class divide, oppression, underprivileged, struggle, inequality.

INTRODUCTION:

The concept of marginality in English literature is quite helpful in understanding the distinction made between two different categories. Marginality is specially associated in relation to the one who is being oppressed and exploited. It particularly delineates people who don't have any power in their hands and are abandoned before the mercy of the powerful. They are the ones who are downtrodden. As they are helpless before their circumstances, they are being oppressed. It is the marginality that restricts one within specific and limited boundaries and captivate them within that. These boundaries are sketched by the people, the society itself. It is a kind of discrimination made between a powerful and a powerless. This is a concept through which the powerless are being kept underprivileged. They are being denied the right of equality in society and are being kept aloof from the mainstream.

CLASS DIVIDE: A ROOT OF DISCRIMINATION:

The most prominent concept in marginality is based upon caste, race and class. Though the world has reached upon the moon. It still fails to cope up with the concept of equality. Our society has a great impact of class system upon it. More than a quality, it focuses on one's class. Which class does he belong to? Is one of the prominent questions, so as to determine his fate and assign him duties accordingly. Individuals are being judged on the basis of their class rather than their talents and skills. Such is the case that we get to see in Aravind Adiga's well-known novel 'The White Tiger'. Here the term 'white tiger' is particularly used not for any animal but for an individual person. White tiger is one of the species of tigers that is rare and thus known for its individual peculiarities. In the novel, the white tiger is a term given to a small school-going boy- Balram Halwai, the protagonist of the novel. The qualities that he possesses, earns him the status that his master class people assume does not match to the group he belongs. In spite of the fact, one has that talent, he is still underestimated and thus deprived of the opportunities just because he is predestined to be treated as a slave or worker as he comes from that working class background. This is the darkest reality of the world. Everywhere in society we get to see some persecuted and oppressed people who are being discriminated on some or the other factors.

Here, Balram Halwai is a specimen of the oppressed and downtrodden people. These downtrodden here are compared to a 'rooster coup' in the novel. They are all the slaves, captivated by their fates. They don't have any option beside accepting their fate as it is and taking it for granted. While Balram was someone, who possesses that special talent which forces him to dream for better tomorrow than his whole group. Every time, he tries in an honest manner but is revoked with disappointment. He is denied chances because the class he was born in was already been pre-designed by the upper-class elites. These upper-class people seem to be the owners of society who have all the rights to form rules and regulations for all the people. Lower class people are just born to yield it. There is a reference in the novel, "in old days there were thousand castes and destinies in India. These days, there are just two castes: Men with Big Bellies, and Men with Small Bellies". (Adiga, p.no.64)

Here the writer has presented two different contrary temperaments that indirectly points at two opposing classes. The one with big belly presents an upper class while at another we have a group of small bellies that represents of low-class people. Now the people with bellies are called so because there grown up belly suggests they have grown it big by exploiting the poors and taking advantage of them. They are the one who make the lower-class people work and let them suffer for themselves while these elite are sitting in their big luxurious mansion with all the amenities. The condition of the marginalized people is clear in the novel when the father of Balram says, "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". (Adiga, pg.no. 30)The sentence itself is self-evident in understanding the condition of these people. The inhuman treatment given to them is a slap to the right of equality provided to us by our constitution. It's not only at one place but the condition is prevalent in many places also. The writer here has eloquently and skillfully portrayed the realistic condition of such lower-class people who lag behind due to their poverty-stricken condition.

MARGINALISATION IN LITERATURE:

The same effort has been made out by many other writers and poets also. Mulk Raj Anand is popularly known as the writer of proletariats has successfully depicted the plight and struggles of the people born as underprivileged. His well-known work 'Two Leave and a Bud' fantastically brings out the struggle and challenges one has to face as a lower class worker. This novels unravels before us brilliantly about the unjust treatments to these people without even a mark of regret by master class. According to such upper class elites these people are the one who actually deserve it and they are actually born to be ruled by the people like us. Here the people have been categorized within two groups. One as the rulers who possess all the authorities and all the powers. The another group as for being ruled upon- the slave of these rulers. And as these downtroddens are helpless before their circumstances, they have to yield to the authority and bow down before them. As they don't have any power in their hands, ultimately succumbs to the oppression and the leftovers of these elites.

Though god hasn't made any difference in making his creatures, people did it by themselves. They have dividied themselves in two different categories for their own benefit. The division is so powerful that, no one can break it. People don't find anything wrong in intermingling with animals, touching them and playing with them. But the same criteria does not follow when it comes to their own co-fellows. Regardless of the qualities and skills they do not want to mix themselves with those people. The situation has fantastically been portrayed in a very lively manner with the characters of Balram Halwai and Oliver Twist and the oppressed masses in *Tale of the Two Cities*.

BALRAM HALWAI: A VICTIM OF MARGINALISATION:

Balram Halwai in *The White Tiger* is distinctively intelligent and surpassing in all the qualities of his own society and fellow mates. Still, he is never offered even a chance to show and prove his caliber. Inequality was already one thing that he had been facing, oppression was another. He was never given the opportunities and the chances he deserved. Though he possessed a very good skills of driving and has never committed any mistake, he was marked for hit and run case. All the blame is put on his head when Pinky Madam crushes a child under her car. It is just like these poor people don't have any life. They don't have right to live for their own. More than that the selfish attitude is even more clear when these upper-class masters just provide a small cold compensation to the family of the dead boy. That too not as death recovery but to get rid of the guilt from their hearts.

At another, Balram was made a scapegoat for Pinky Madam's crime. The next day, all was forgotten in the upper-class family. The crime, the guilt everything was washed over in a blink like a dream for them. While the lives of the two poor families were on stake forever thereafter. And there was no one to take care for that just because they were downtrodden and they have been born to be exploited and used by their rulers in their opinion. It is their duty to obey them even if they have to sacrifice their whole life, they should do in their view.

Charles Dickens, the prominent writer of the age, also known as the peasant's writer depicts in a very realistic manner the condition of poor people in his 'Tale of Two Cities' and Oliver Twist'. Marquis St Evremonde from 'Tale of Two Cities' is the image of extravagantly cruel and pitiless aristocrat having no sympathy and regard for the lives of poor people. His crucial attitude is highlighted in the incident when he crushes a small child under his car and without showing even a mark of regret just throws out a coin of gold of his wallet mercilessly as a compensation before the crying father of the dead child. His unsympathetic and indifferent behavior is evident when he says, "you dogs! I would ride over any of you very willingly, and exterminate you from the earth." (Dickens, pg. no.6) It seems that the poor people are not human beings but a property of these masters that they can use it in any way as per their own will. They even have a right to crush them to death if they wish so and they would still be negligible because their life has no meaning. He further adds, "It is extraordinary to me, that you people cannot take care of themselves and their children... how do I know what injury you have done to my horses" (Dickens, pg. no. 5)

The indifferent attitude of these people is such that even after crushing a small child under his ride, he is caring for the expected injury of his horse rather than providing even a condolence on the death of the child. Through his attitude, it is clear how futile they think these people's existence is and how they are.

The similar utilitarian behaviour is seen in the novel 'Oliver Twist' also. The working class boys are oppressed and starved to half stomach. They are kept only to be used and not expecting anything more in turn. On asking for more food, Oliver Twist was angrily fetched to the superior master to determine his fate. "please sir, I want some more... that boy will be hung, I know that boy will be hung,"

CONCLUSION:

To be direct, the upper class elites are treating these poor working class people as a machine which only works on their signals. The cold-hearted, inhuman treatment is so much evident in the behaviours of Marquis St Everemonde from 'Tale of Two Cities', master in 'Oliver Twist' and the masters of Balram Halwai also. However sincere, however dedicated and however talented the servant is, he will still be a servant without even regard. This is the preconceived attitude that compels one to ignore one's talent and prefer someone on the basis of the class rather than his calibre.

"All are human beings
Do not this hatred preserve
With an equal humanistic view,
Provide the opportunity they deserve".

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