

**ADVANCE SOCIAL SCIENCE ARCHIVE JOURNAL**Available Online: <https://assajournal.com>

Vol. 5 No. 01 Jan-Mar 2026. Page#. 4230-4246

Print ISSN: [3006-2497](#) Online ISSN: [3006-2500](#)

Platform & Workflow by: Open Journal Systems

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21374442>***The White Tiger: A Critique of Exploitative Class System and Capitalist Relations in India*****Dr. Atta-ul-Mustafa**Assistant Professor, Department of English & Linguistics, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad
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Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008) critiques India's exploitative class system and the entrenchment of capitalist relations that perpetuate inequality. Using Johan Galtung's theory of imperialism (1971) as a framework, the article examines how systemic dominance drives not only at the global level but also within India's internal socio-economic structures. Adiga's narrative shows the lopsided relationship between the wealthy elite and the deprived masses, highlighting apparatuses of exploitation, dependency, and structural violence. The protagonist Balram's journey from serfdom to entrepreneurial success reveals the tensions of Neoliberal capitalism where liberation is attained only through morally ambiguous acts that reproduce the very violence of the system. By positioning *The White Tiger* within Galtung's model, the article argues that India's capitalist order functions as an imperialist structure in miniature, with urban elites acting as "center nations" and rural poor as "periphery nations." This study emphasizes how literature can clarify the suppressed violence of economic systems, showing the continuity of imperialist dynamics in postcolonial societies.

Keywords: Neoliberalism, Capitalism, Globalization, Exploitation, Structural Violence.

1. Introduction

Aravid Adiga's novel *The White Tiger* (2008) reflects neo-imperialist hegemony in India. Adiga reveals the neoliberalist motives of Western ideology, focusing on national apprehension and sociopolitical transformations under globalization.

1.1. Politico-Economic Context of the Problem

The motives of globalization, as a new form of cultural imperialism, between Euro-American and Asian traditions are distinguished; unlike the celebratory mode of Euro-American view, the neoliberal model portrays itself as a neo-imperialist project of advanced enterprises in economic and cultural spheres of South Asia where state values have collapsed due to global politics. Dictatorial regimes implement the rule of law, curb civil rights, and attain ethnoreligious purification. The devastations in Russia, Turkey, India, Hungary, Myanmar, China, Rwanda, Venezuela, Thailand, and the Philippines are unfittingly associated with local history, populist media, and politicians. The state organs of advanced political awareness and authorities had designed a globe-conquering philosophy of national fates in 19th century. This being an age of global capitalism and mechanical integration, the same brands can be purchased anywhere in

the world. Google and Facebook are equally accessible, but national life is heading towards marginalized disintegration (Dasgupta, 2018). Wars continued throughout Eurasia in the early 20th century. National democratic revolutions and communist movements have been occurring one after the other (Enfu & Baolin, 2021). The old superpowers' effort to ruin the notions of an international society since 1918 has turned the framework of nation-state into an anarchic criminal world (Dasgupta, 2018). Contrary effects of globalization are visible in the West and East; some are globalized while others are victimized.

1.2. Delimitation of the Study

Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008) encompasses exploitative occurrences of Neoliberalist globalization. Critiquing the Capitalist designs of global forces, the work makes out how these occurrences are perceived in India with reference to post-9/11 phase of globalism. Besides, it discusses how they conceal their politico-economic activities in the fascinating camouflage of globalization while dealing with other lands.

1.3. Significance of Study

Neoliberal programs of globalization are featured by a move to open markets, low state intervention, free movement of capital and goods, and privatization of nationalized industries (Mooney & Evans, 2007, pp. IX-X). Mooney and Evans (2007) argue that globalization, as a provider of macroeconomic template used by the leading global economic institutions such as International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), and World Trade Organization (WTO), designs the Neo-imperialist agenda that characterizes much of Adiga's work (2008). The discourse shows both a high awareness of and a reaction to imperialism acting as neoliberal global culture. The worldwide security measures taken after 9/11 attacks reflect the political dynamics running counter to hyperglobalizers' predictions of a borderless world (Steger, 2003, p. 67). The subjugation of national governments to supranational governments as part of *great global game* is in progress, causing the global forces, local countries, and even ethnic militant groups to compete and cooperate for financial and strategic interests (Watson et al, 2013, pp. 183-193). Every step in South Asia, including the global war on terror, is aimed at imposing hegemonic imperial culture there. This study analyzes the hegemonic schema launched by global imperialist forces in Indian culture. It traces a direct link between global forces' economic interests and their efforts to damage the Indian character i.e. "the other" through political and cultural strategies of Neoliberalism.

2. Literature Review

Literature examines that apart from the schemes for governance and politics of nation-states, globalization also impacts the growing exchange of finances causing economy to adapt to a universal shape. National economies are 'subsumed and rearticulated' into the global framework of exchanges (Hirst et al., 2009). Avilés (2006) observes global capitalism as identical with economic globalization, which has accelerated internationalization of capital technology through the worldwide spread of factory systems. In the capitalist globalization, a weaker democratic system is associated with Neoliberalism instituting the economic and political milieu opposite to the ventures of global companies (2006).

Globalization ensures a free flow of capital, goods, and labor in the market for developing nations by opening national borders. This exploitative policy of neo-empire is also known as *cosmopolitanism*. Internationalization is largely a *by-product* of the US-multilateral economic order. The Second World War led to the liberalization of national economies (Held, 2003). Callinicos explains recent intensification of worldwide trade and foreign investment as a new phase of Western imperialism that monopolizes national governments (Callinicos et al, 2016, pp. 3-48). Krugman (1999, pp. 79-94) questions the popular belief in the international division of

labor. Export of jobs of multinational corporations to the South has caused deindustrialization in North. Internationalization has restructured global economic relations causing a rift between the privileged and poor within the marginalized nations (pp. 79-94). Hirst (1997) argues that despite this discriminatory treatment, internationalization has increased economic marginalization of many *Third World States*. The flow of trade and investment within the rich North has intensified the exclusion of rest of the world (pp. 409-425).

Scholte (2005) says that globalization as internationalization refers to the cross-border relations and development of universal trade and interdependency. It amounts to liberalization which indicates a course of lifting 'government-imposed restrictions' on activities between countries to boost an open, borderless world economy. Those who resisted regulatory trade obstacles and capital controls secured this within the cloak of globalization. The word globalization accompanies the adjective of 'neoliberal' and, therefore, globalization means the late 20th or early 21st century capitalism, different from its previous appearance (George, 2007). Neoliberal globalization removes restraints on financial and trade activities. Global organizations under neoliberalism challenge the writ of nation-states, letting down their decisions and laws about workers' rights, acts about the safety of chemicals and medicines, and environmental standards. It strains the survival of trade unions and a welfare state, since these organizations could resist the loose impacts of commercial abuse (pp. 4-11).

Neoliberal version acknowledged as the universal insight for humanity was criticized by detractors like Monbiot (2016) due to an induction of the knowledge-based economy in management and marketing. The wealthy justify their fortunes as merit, ignoring education, inheritance, and class advantages. The poor blame themselves for their failures, even if they could do little to alter their circumstances (Monbiot, 2016). In a so-called 'global knowledge society', the economy has a superior, blissful status. The gush of economic knowledge frequently confounds globalization with an '*information-society*' pattern. Knowledge is reduced to the information-society (Delic, 2011). According to Harvey (2005), neoliberalism implies that "human well-being can best be proceeded by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (p. 2). Thus, free competition meant freedom for the capitalists to make huge profits as they wished. At the core of neoliberal philosophy, contemporary globalization has often been associated by terms like global capitalism or capitalist globalization. He equates globalization with that of Westernization or modernization, mainly in Americanized form; globalization is perceived as a vibrant force that widens the social structures of modernity, such as industrialism, capitalism, bureaucratism, and rationalism around the world, usually by wiping out native cultures and local self-rule. For some circles, globalization is essentially what Americanization is (Giddens, 1999). People from regions other than Europe and North America take globalization as Westernization or Americanization, since the USA holds a leading place in terms of economy, culture, and supremacy of the armed forces in global order. Many American multinational companies leave an impression that globalization concerns the industrial 'North' and that the 'South' has no active role in it. The developing southern societies hold globalization responsible for destroying aboriginal culture, worldwide disparities, and the degeneration of poor communities. It has become a game of 'winners and losers'; only a few people follow the fast track of opulence, whereas most people are denied their rights. North is still plundering the South in the name of selling goods by corporations. So, it is suitable to call today's world a *global pillage* rather than a global village (Held, 2004, pp. 15-16). Globalization is identified as deterritorialization, spread of supraterritoriality, reconfiguration of geography; social space is no

longer completely plotted in terms of territorial places, territorial distances, and territorial borders (Scholte, 2005).

Steger investigates the theory of neo-liberalism with its historical developments (2017, pp. 37-41). Pointing to the versatility of globalization, he illustrates the concepts of economic, cultural, political, and ideological dimensions of globalization by declaring it a contested procedure. Neoliberalists opine that international financial competition does not create a zero-sum outcome. Although specific groups of a nation become awful in global competition, all nations have a comparative advantage in creating certain goods. Taking this optimistic view as unjustified, Marxists and radicals accept that global capitalism reinforces structural outlines of disparity among countries. They also agree with neoliberalists regarding the intricate, outmoded nature of conventional opportunities for social protection. Despite the professed growth of globalization, its phenomena are not equally understandable to everybody because of the difference between its causal dynamics and structural consequences (Hostettler, 2010). Dismissing the claim that globalization reorganizes economic links among nations, Hostettler discloses the planted models of inequality and chain of command in the world economy which have transformed the nature and structural shape of marginality from its previous model of subjugating the 'Third World' (2010, pp. 89-103).

Themes of individualism, financial desire, and the moral price of achievement have long dominated Western literary works such as Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (2003) or Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* (2022). These novels serve as cultural texts that both reflect and critique the capitalist culture ingrained in Western cultures. Several Indian Anglophone novels, too, vividly explore the tension between individual ambition, financial desire, and the moral costs of achievement—most notably R.K. Narayan's *The Financial Expert* (2021) and *The Guide* (1958), and Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008). These works dramatize how personal success often collides with ethical compromise and social responsibility to see how Indian Anglophone fiction uniquely frames the moral costs of ambition. Theme of individualism vs. tradition is reflected through characters like Raju (*The Guide*) and Balram (*The White Tiger*). Both embody the struggle to assert individuality against societal norms. Similarly, the theme of financial desire as driving force is communicated through novels such as *The Financial Expert* and *The White Tiger*: Wealth is portrayed as both liberating and corrupting—Margayya's obsession in *The Financial Expert* and Balram's ambition in *The White Tiger* show how financial desire reshapes identity. Also, the theme of moral Price of achievement is depicted through each novel. Each novel underscores that success often demands ethical compromise—fraud, betrayal, or even violence. The narratives criticize the cost of ambition in a society balancing tradition and modernity. These works are not just stories of personal ambition; they are social critiques of India's transition from tradition to modern capitalism. Moreover, they highlight the fragility of moral values under economic pressure of the center, the conflict between selfhood and community responsibility, and the universal dilemma of whether success justifies ethical compromise.

In fact, globalization has profoundly reshaped South Asia's economy, culture, ethics, and politics, often to the detriment of its people and resources. While dynamic, it generates complex challenges, including ethical erosion, social decline, intensified competition, and deepening poverty. Overall, its adverse effects outweigh its potential benefits (Kumari, 2015, pp. 107-113).

3. Theoretical Frameworks

Galtung's center-periphery model (1971) explains how global capitalism reproduces inequality. According to Galtung, the center-nations exploit periphery-nations, while within each nation, internal centers exploit their own peripheries. An imperialist nation's center establishes its domination in the dominated nation's center to foster common interests between the two.

Galtung says (1971) that the center-nation exerts its influence over the periphery-nation leading towards a conflict of interests. Imperialism links a center and a peripheral nation to systemize the function at three levels: first, the centers of both the nations –center and periphery nations– have common interests; second, the peripheral-nation has more discordant interests than that of the center-nation; and third, a peripheral-nation has contradictory interests from its own center to the periphery. Center of the imperialist nation positions itself in the center of the dominated nation bringing harmony of interests to the two centers. It protects the two peripheries apart from having less inequality in the dominant than in the dominated nation. Galtung (1971) enumerates two mechanisms: a vertical interaction structure and a feudal interaction structure. The five types of imperialism are economic, political, military, communication, and cultural. Going beyond the military or economic fields, Galtung (1971) discusses political, communicative, and cultural areas. Structural violence is the outcome of imperialism while the mechanisms that are sketches of two operating parts of any imperialism, direct structural violence. Galtung defines structural violence as the systemic ways in which social structures harm individuals. As for political imperialism, all decisions are made in the center of the center-nation and those decisions certainly influence the economic, military, and cultural patterns, too (Galtung, 1971, pp. 81-117).

Imperialism, now-a-days, has assumed the shape of globalization (Steger, 2003). The budding neoliberal economic order received legitimacy with 1989-1991 collapse of communism (p. 41). Neoliberal policies were globally adopted by the Bush administration (1989-93) to seek domination on three foundation pillars: support for democratic struggles against military regimes, imposition of a Free Trade Area of the Americas backed by a greater military presence in the region, and use of the “war against drugs” and “war against terrorism” as pretexts (Regalado, 2010). It rendered America’s economic dominance, exposing her search for profits through monopolizing national companies or the *Cells of Imperialism* to use Santos’ phrase (Starr, 2018).

“The old forces relied on direct conflicts to colonize but the new ones use the means like trade sanctions, blockage of development funds, and other aids to force the weaker nations to obey their demands like exporting oil, minerals, raw natural products, timbers, and importing electronic goods, tobacco products, clothes, and finished products” (Ali, 2002, p. 85).

Using Galtung’s lens, the study analyzes how imperialist forces have found their footing in the center of the periphery-India where elites have subjugated the periphery people showing alignment of interests with those of global imperialists.

4. Analysis

Adiga’s *The White Tiger* (2008) critiques the socioeconomic reality of post-Independence India focusing on repression, resistance, and marginalization of the layman, which is the product of both vertical interaction structure and feudal interaction system if seen through Galtung’s lens (1971). Neoliberalism as the advanced capitalist imperialism subjugates common man demanding his loyalty towards masters and submission to class, caste, and race-based systems. *The White Tiger* (2008) critiques the skimpy economic and social circumstances of Indians, showing their split into haves and have-nots under structural violence of political and cultural imperialism. It reflects how market-oriented economic system works as a ‘Rooster Coop’ exploiting the masses (2008). Through privatization, neoliberalism has decreased the role of Indian state in economy rendering it a periphery-nation that safeguards the interests of center-nation. It has deregulated price controls, and capital market to lower trade barriers. The adoption of neoliberal reforms and innovations has transitioned Indian economic and political system to a pro-capitalist model of a postindustrial society, as is visible in Adiga’s New Delhi (2008). Major

economic changes transpire in India where “... things have changed” (2008, p. 89) the social patterns to establish a neoliberal identity, remapping Indian landscapes to market needs, adopting new forms of global capital flow, and transforming national economic fabric by improving the living standards of middle class and expanding the free market. Socioeconomic fabric experiences the influence of economic globalization in the form of importing global commodities, advancement of the IT sector, rise of the middle class, and rebuilding of new city areas (Oza, 2012).

Looking through Galtung’s concept (1971), India is a periphery nation in relation to global centers (e.g., the U.S., WB, IMF etc.), yet within India, Delhi and its elite acts as the “center” exploiting rural peripheries like Balram’s village. Galtung’s lens of cultural imperialism (1971) refers to how values and practices from the global center are transmitted and reshaped in the periphery. The novel reflects that Delhi and Bangalore, as centers of neo-imperialist ventures, are in direct contact with center-nation. Bangalore, India’s principal *IT center* or what Balram *Halwai*, the protagonist calls the “world’s center of Technology and Outsourcing” (Adiga, 2008, p. 5), experiences an increasing influence of cultural imperialism because the American outsourcing companies have occupied the cultural space besides the soil displacing local businesses and cultures in coordination with the center of peripheral-nation, India. Outsourcing is a move of manufacturing jobs to poorer economies which is seen not only as a capitalist search for cheap labor but also reduction in the importance of labor to capitalism (Susser & Patterson, 2001). Adiga (2008) focuses on the oppressed people’s resistance to the multinational companies, prevailing caste system, bureaucracy and useless government policies through the characters of Balram and Vijay who challenge the shackles of both feudal and vertical interaction structures. The hierarchical hegemony of feudalism (as periphery-Indian nation’s agent safeguarding economic interests of the center-nation) and top to bottom organizational structure of the capitalist forces in the form of outsourcing companies and UNO organizations have made layman’s life difficult. *The White Tiger* (2008) rejects the idols of capitalist forces challenging their monopoly which has hindered Indian progress. It brings to light the plight of downtrodden Indians who live a life of drudgery. It shows the immoral and murky side of polished metropolitan cities as an outcome of unknown socioeconomic marginal groups breaking into the sovereignty of Delhi and Bangalore.

The narrative revolves around the ambitious protagonist *Balram Halwai* alias *Munna’s* (p. 13) ascension from a poor North Indian village to the center of Bangalore as an enthusiastic “half-baked” (p. 10) entrepreneur, from the impoverished and oppressed condition to wealth and prosperity. Balram’s entrepreneurial success is achieved through murder and corruption, underscoring how capitalist ascent in India often requires violent rupture rather than meritocratic opportunity. He projects him as a self-made man who assumes the responsibility for his own welfare. The narrative comprises three phases of Balram’s life: poverty in Dark India (under structural violence of feudal lords), settlement in Delhi as a driver (under structural violence of capitalist vertical organization) and then emergence as a successful entrepreneur in Bangalore (becoming himself a part of exploitative violence). His change into a ruthless businessman mirrors the exploitative logic of capitalist system: survival and success depend on domination, not equity. Adiga (2008) critiques capitalism as a system that does not liberate the oppressed but reshapes them into new exploiters, perpetuating cycles of inequality across both national and global levels and hence validating Galtung’s model (1971). Balram, in his letter to Chinese Premier Mr. Jiaobao describes Bangalore as the “world’s center of technology and outsourcing”, (Adiga, 2008, p. 5) and the story begins here. Balram is born in the “Darkness” (p. 14) in a rickshaw-puller’s (p. 13) joint family whose men and women must sleep separately in

two small portions of their house (p. 21). The village is controlled by four landlords (pointing feudal interaction structure in Galtung's 1971 concept): The Buffalo, the Stork, the Wild Boar, and the Raven, each named after their "peculiarities of appetite" (p. 24), greed and lust. All four live in manor houses located in landlords' luxurious quarters (p. 25) to secure their families from Naxal's invasions who have already kidnapped and killed Buffalo's infant-son (p. 24). The Buffalo brutally "finished off" (p. 67) the servant, his wife and sister because of his alleged hand in the kidnap. This shows how structural violence has raised mistrust and split between haves and have-nots. Balram moves out of the inborn wretched condition employing his childhood abilities after his TB-afflicted father passes away in the ill-facilitated "*LOHIA UNIVERSAL FREE HOSPITAL*" (pp. 48-50). He works as a servant boy in a tea-stall at Dhanbad to manage his educational expenditures and payback loan that family had borrowed from Stork to marry one of Balram's cousins. Tea-shop owner maligns and kicks him out for eavesdropping customers' talk. His brother Kishan and cousin Dilip guide him to start career as a "human spider afresh" (Adiga, 2008, pp. 51-52) in Dhanbad. By overhearing from Dhanbad coalminers that a car driver is paid reasonably, Balram learns "how to drive a car" (pp. 53-54). Since "[t]here's no reward for entrepreneurship" (p. 59), Balram becomes a servant-cum-driver at Dhanbad in his Stork's house. The Stork selects him for driving his America-flipped son, Ashok's Honda City car. Being submissive, he becomes in good books of his employer.

Balram is introduced to Delhi's high culture while driving for Ashok. His servitude to Ashok highlights how exploitation is sustained by the attachment between oppressor and oppressed, though the relationship is defined by domination and humiliation. Balram befools his masters pretending to respect them as is expected from anyone of his caste (pp. 229-230). He feigns to be loyal and subservient since he understands the power dynamics between landlords and himself. Later, Balram brags about his acting with self-satisfaction:

You should have seen me that day—what a performance of wails and kisses and tears! You'd think I'd been born into a caste of performing actors! And all the time, while clutching the Stork's feet, I was staring at his huge, dirty, uncut toenails, and thinking...Why isn't he back home, screwing poor fishermen of their money and humping their daughters? (Adiga, 2008, p. 61).

His ingenuity in minor tasks encourages him to accomplish the major target of his life, that is to become a success story. However, obtaining riches usually entails transgressing moral principles, which calls into question whether capitalism or moral responsibility can exist. This internal conflict is highlighted in *The White Tiger* (2008). Balram murders his boss, steals his money, and eventually starts a prosperous life as an entrepreneur in the center of India's affluent class to get out of his predicament and enjoy the luxurious life in the metropolis of Bangalore. The narrative is quite compelling since it captures large parts in Western capitalist cultures. Competition, individualism and achieving at any cost are frequently emphasized in Balram's case. He embarks on an entrepreneurial start-up i.e. "White Tiger Drivers" (p. 301) and wins a "contract with American Express (p. 45) in Bangalore by robbing his master of life and money. As a "master of drivers" (p. 302), he is a success-story who has "changed from a haunted criminal into a solid pillar of Bangalorean society" (p. 292). Delhi transduces him from his roots in the Dark to that of the denizen of an ultramodern society reinvigorating his awareness and renewing his attitude. Being "an intelligent, honest, vivacious fellow in this crowd of thugs and idiots" (p. 35), he proves to be "the white tiger" (p. 35) as was titled by the education inspector at school. Being, "a thinking man" (p. 3), Balram Halwai is a conscious and responsible citizen developing his caliber and converting tactical skills to adjust in the city culture. His self-taught ability makes him a successful entrepreneur. Soon he achieves financial success without investing any inherited capital or social space. Balram's rise illustrates this nested hierarchy as reflected in embracing

the vertical social structure of the periphery nation; he moves from the periphery (rural poverty) to the center of his periphery-nation (affluent Delhi) and eventually positions himself as a local capitalist exploiting others, the one who is not only connected with the global capitalist world but also helping them by adding up to the income of outsourcing companies such as *Hewlette-Packard*, *IBM* and *American Epress* being operated from America, the center-nation.

Balram's tale is an account of India's neoliberal success i.e. a success of call-centers and outsourcing of labor in IT industry which has led to a surge in the middle-class service sector producing several self-made business owners like him. Neoliberalism recognizes the individual by extending classical liberalism's faith in the individual as a rational chooser within the market (Lipman & Hursh, 2007). It defines the individual differently both as an autonomous entrepreneur and a rational optimizer. Balram's *wise* choice makes him an independent entrepreneur. His emergence as a cunning businessman helps understand how to tap the market profitably. Balram quickly recognizes the potential of market for the nighttime cab service for call-center workers and enters the industry with expertise. He believes that globalization can usher in a new era for India and that outsourcing means "doing things in India for Americans over the phone" (Adiga, 2008, p. 298); i.e. Galtung's lens (1971) of how peripheral-center works not only in harmony with that of the center-nation (America) but also for safeguarding the interests of the center-nation. Since everything flows "from it – real estate, wealth, power, sex", he intends to join it at every cost (p. 298). His success, however, is because he plays according to the rules of neoliberal capitalism because much of the land is owned by American Hewlett-Packard, IBM, and American Express. Hence Balram's is the type of moral belief in which moral principles are twisted to serve one's interests.

4.1 Neoliberalization in *The White Tiger*

The White Tiger (2008) shows the effects of 1991 free-trade neoliberal policies on India. Multinational companies' entrepreneurship has modernized India. Balram (2008) writes to Chinese premier, Mr. Jiabao that Indian government has imposed IMF's neoliberal policies in sectors like finance, health, public expenditure, taxes, and biotechnology. Consequently, the globalized-market is a better provider for laymen than state itself, but the claimed-emancipation of neoliberalism never enters their lives. Balram, Adiga critiques (2008), is ascended socially and becomes a success-story only when he rejects socioeconomically peripheral *habitus* in a small North Indian village to self-start as a "half-baked" (p. 10) entrepreneur using his wit and experience amidst the global capital flow in the open market of Bangalore, though he finds no reward for entrepreneurship (p. 59). He arrives Dhanbad to become a part of global capitalist project because an affiliation with this network is a path to success (a first level in Galtung's concept of Imperialism where centers of both –periphery and center– nations work in harmony for common interests).

At second level, we find that the periphery-Indian nation has more discordant interests than that of the center-nation, as conceptualized by Galtung (1971). Hunger for money and power promotes ruthless competition in Balram. After winning the job of a driver, Balram is selected to go along Ashok and his American wife Pinky to Delhi, the center of periphery-nation. He gets acquainted with corrupt practices being exercised by all, from master to chauffeur. Delhi corrupts his soul where he loses sense of fairness and foul. How Balram, the driver can be innocent if his master Ashok is soaked in corruption (Adiga, 2008, p. 197) especially when he believes it is an entrepreneur's privilege "to break the law of his land to turn bad news into good news" (p. 38) by adopting high culture practices.

Exposing the reality of India, Balram writes to Chinese premier about the split between Indo-Gangetic BIMARU states (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh) and those of south Indian states such as Bangalore:

“India is two countries in one: an India of Light, and an India of Darkness. The Ocean brings light to my country. Every place on the map of India near the ocean is well off. But the river brings darkness to India—the black river” (Adiga, 2008, p. 14).

The third level shows (in Galtung’s concept; 1971) that the peripheral-nation (Dark India) has contradictory interests from its own center (Light India) to the periphery. Balram sees the state population divided into two castes; Darkness denotes the oppressed lower-class deprived of everything whereas the Light represents upper-class teemed with unfair crookedness. Fate of Dark India’s marginalized communities is in the hands of Light India’s exploiters. Dark India is soaked in corruption, greed, inhumanity, and inequality due to hegemonic patterns of class, caste, wealth, and religion – the same as rooted in Western capitalist culture. Balram hints in the letter that the places located on the banks of the “black river” (p. 14) are immersed in darkness symbolizing the imprisoning of people into the “traps” (p. 15) of hunger, want, disease, and ignorance. The landlords named as Stork, Buffalo, Wild Boar, and Raven (pp. 24-25) have damaged people’s lives to appease their own greed. Their exploitative measures have made villagers’ life tough: Buffalo is a profiteer, Stork extorts toll from boatmen and a cut from fish-catchers’ income, Wild Boar, holding agricultural lands, enslaves poor farmers, and Raven, having the worst lands, extorts money from goatherds (pp. 24-25). The farmers are exploited economically and physically by these exploiters settled in the capital city of peripheral India. When after a hard labor, the “leaner, darker, angrier” villagers including Balram’s father and uncles return from the Light, their women extort earnings and give them food after feeding the water-buffaloes (Adiga, 2008, p. 26) because these women are duty-bound to serve their master first. Exploitation has increased trafficking of men to cities where they earn living through hard labor. Dark India is where people dive into the relic of “feces, straw, soggy parts of human bodies” (p. 15) gifted by the neo-imperialists who have anchored on the shores of ‘other India’ [Bright India] after streaming through the ocean. No borders halt their arrival or retard shipments of their earnings because the delivery of cultural cargoes wrapped in marginalized wrappers have paved their path. Since a land and its assets matter more than anything else, the “well off” (p. 14) city of Bangalore located alongside the ocean, attracts neoliberalists to establish call-centers of outsourcing companies to run their businesses.

Vijay, a character from the Dark who has been Balram’s hero since childhood (Adiga, 2008, p. 270), shows how local Indian realities absorb, reshape, and re-express global capitalist influences. His rise from a rural background to political power illustrates how cultural flows—capitalism, globalization, consumerism, and media—are translated into the local idioms of corruption, ambition, and survival. India’s future has to do with Bangalore because every third office building in India, Vijay tells Ashok, is being constructed in Bangalore (p. 272) where we Aryans are beginning on a good business-footing (second level of Galtung’s concept; 1971). As for South, that is full of Tamils who are negroes in their manners and are now challenging dominance of the North. Aryans of high culture –which they have received directly from center-nation– feel enmity with natives of Darkness i.e. the Tamils who are traditional and could be modernized, are the victims of high castes’ exploitation. This shows how Imperialism links center and periphery nations systemizing the function at third level; i.e. a periphery nation has more contradictory interests from its center to periphery, as conceptualized by Galtung (1971). Born and grown up in Darkness, Vijay started as a bus conductor when he first fascinated Balram in his *Khaki* uniform. Soon he became an active political worker of *the Great Socialist* and now has

ascended to the slot of deputy president with Stork as the president of the party-wing in Laxmangarh. Balram sees him at Stork's house in Dhanbad when *the Great Socialist* comes to threaten the Stork family for supporting opposition party in the upcoming election. Now Vijay is a successful entrepreneur because he plays according to the neoliberal rules. This, too, motivates Balram to be a successful entrepreneur like him. Balram sees Vijay second time emerging from Imperial hotel with Ashok when he was dressed in a modern Indian businessman's getup (p. 270). Balram had to drop him somewhere. From Vijay's conversation with the fellow-politician, Balram comes to know that Ashok has promised to pay seven lacs (Rs. 700000/-) as extortion for coal-pilferage and tax-evasion (p. 271). It shows vertical structure violence of institutions (in Galtung's concept; 1971) that prevents people from fetching their needs and rights in a rightful manner. Another harmony in both -center and periphery- nations is exposed here in the form of tax-stealing: the way outsourcing companies have arrived in India to evade taxation in America is reflected in the elite of Delhi as well who steal way their taxes through ministers. Neoliberal material culture transitions society into a postindustrial phase despite oppression in the Darkness. Dark India is in adaptation/ changing mode whereas Light India has approved the adoption of neoliberal culture. Belief in "Mother Ganga, daughter of the Vedas, river of illumination, protector" (p. 15) cannot shield Darkness from feudalism as conceived by Galtung (1971). Defying the vigor of Light is not possible for dwellers of Darkness who are trafficked to "Delhi, Calcutta, and Dhanbad" (p. 25) to earn living while going there by buses and trains packed inside after many hours' wait at their village teashops. Symbolic culture of Darkness is demolished by the economic capital of Light. Hence things are different now in the *Dark India* from where "stupid" (p. 54) people travel to address starvation, want, and exploitation and "[e]very now and then a truck comes by, and all their hands outstretch, shouting, 'Take me! Take me!'" (p. 55). This structural violence of imperialism affects the cultural, political and communicative areas of the periphery-Indian nation. While driving Ashok, Mongoose and Pinky to Delhi as their driver, Balram sees a huge number of villagers coming for employment in buses and jeeps. Finding his way to Delhi by following migrants' vehicles, he realizes as if the "whole world was migrating" (p. 111) to metropolitan cities of Delhi and Bangalore.

Balram's mother-state Bihar is known for its high poverty rate, illiteracy and corruption representing the failure of nation-state. Balram writes to Mr. Jiabao about the shortage of "drinking water, electricity, sewage system, public transportation, sense of hygiene" (Adiga, 2008, p. 4). People are deprived of the right of education which is a weak social institution in the Dark. They are not disciplined, courteous, or punctual (p. 4). Economic capital varies in the village areas. Even dusters, chairs, and uniforms for poor students are not available in slums. When education inspector, during his surprise visit to village school, enquires the teachers about the shortage of items, saying – "How much money have you stolen from the school funds, you sister-fucker?" (Adiga, 2008, p. 34) – the teachers start cowering with fear. The inspector assesses students' reading skills by writing four sentences on the board. No student save Balram could read. The inspector praises Balram for his intelligence and vivacity entitling him, "*The White Tiger*" i.e. "the creature that comes along only once in a generation" (p. 35). Balram critiques that when government does not provide 'free food', or does not make timely payments to teachers, they steal away the grants or sell uniforms to neighbouring villages (p. 33). Laxmangarh has no well-furnished hospital (p. 47) though several politicians have laid the foundation of *Lohia hospital* thrice before three general elections. When Balram's father spews blood, an aged Muslim who has come there for dressing his wounded leg, tells Balram that his father is suffering from tuberculosis. People in *Dark* are suffering from Jaundice and Tuberculosis (pp. 49-50) but government's indifference to the public has increased their difficulties. On Balram's asking why

government does not arrange a doctor in hospital, the old Muslim tells that whenever the post is vacant, *the Great Socialist* makes the highest bid at the “open auction” (p. 49) of the vacant post of superintendent to earn money. He tells Balram that the “rate for this post is about four hundred thousand rupees these days” (p. 49). India has improved its economy through neoliberal reforms and innovations, but people are deprived of the necessities. Monopoly of the elite over resources has retarded the proper circulation of wealth in society resulting in delayed social and economic development in India.

The crooked businessmen become politicians to safeguard their financial interests defiling politics. Their privileged status helps them steal away taxes. Ashok, a representative of elite, who has gone abroad for higher education, shifts to Delhi to look after his father’s coal-business. He comes back from USA with a liberal exposure and egalitarian ideals. Previously, Stork family had been settling their tax-affairs through *the Great Socialist*. But as Stork has taken a political stance against the *Great Socialist*, the politician settles old scores with Stork. When Ashok bribes him one and a half million for tax-stealing, the *Great Socialist* taunts the Stork family saying:

Bullshit. You’ve got a good scam going here—taking coal for free from the government mines. You’ve got it going because I let it happen. You were just some little village landlord when I found you—I brought you here—I made you what you are today: and by God, you cross me, and you’ll go back there into that village. I said a million and a fucking half (Adiga, 2008, p. 104).

Balram’s happiness knows no bounds on seeing the *Great Socialist* admonishing his masters. The hegemonized people side with the elite if they represent their grievances and aspirations even though they are involved in selling jobs, killing opponents, and embezzling funds (Adiga, 2008). Disappointed by the *Great Socialist*, both Ashok and his brother Mukesh go to Delhi to settle tax-affairs of their coal business by bribing a minister. Balram writes to Chinese premier about the hegemonic neoliberal policies which have brought along social anomalies converting Delhi into a metropolis where civilization appears and disappears (p. 281); people are no more attached to their norms. They have lost identity and even house numbering is not sequential. Exploitation hampers people’s sustenance in Delhi because they must bear the structural violence of thugs sitting in national institutions of excise and taxation. On their visit to Delhi for bargaining in the tax department, Ashok feels disappointed at the tax-payment procedure. He is annoyed at “fucking joke” like political system. Mukesh says, “Things are complicated in India, Ashok. It’s not like in America” (p. 137). He further says that even Balram “knows more about India than you do right now. We need a fixer. He’ll get us the interview with a minister that we need. That’s how Delhi works.” (p. 121). On Mukesh’s asking about his plan, Ashok tells him that he will settle in some posh area instead of going back to America. The advanced area of Gurgaon reflects *westernization*. Once there was nothing save buffaloes and water (p. 121) but now Gurgaon, Ashok says to Mongoose, is “the most American part of the city” where he intends to settle with Pinky so that she may not force him to go back to America (p. 121). The established offices of American companies –Hewlett-Packard, IBM, and American Express– have caused cultural imperialism in posh areas of Delhi, but the capitalist ventures of these companies have increased poverty and miseries in the adjacent slums with the migrants’ arrival as the wildness and rubbish run along the posh areas (2008).

Despite enjoying all facilities, the rich do not pay taxes. Tax payment is a national liability but under the neoliberalist policies, it equally crushes the life of the payer. Ashok, the “younger thug” (p. 242) as Balram calls him, says there remains nothing to eat after paying taxes. Ashok is hybridized, a *mélange* in Spencer and Wollman’s concept (2002) who has acquired a third space i.e. he wants to enjoy facilities like Americans but is not willing to pay taxes fairly. Tax-stealing by the rich is borne by laymen. The poor face enormous inflation as it is reflected in Indian

peripheral nation's failure to run affairs autonomously. Fair taxation is the core of economy failing which the sitting government borrows loans from WB and IMF on their terms and conditions. Indian taxation has become much more complicated due to the adoption and adaptation of neoliberal policies. National sovereignty is compromised because New Delhi receives dictations from global actors in everything –from health to biotechnology (Manzo, 1998). Balram writes to Chinese Premier how the US-educated Ashok has entrenched in the curse of tax-stealing. Balram notices that Ashok is not satisfied with their tax-lawyer Ramanathan for his inefficiency in arranging a meeting with the minister to find out a “way” (p. 121). He asks Mukesh, “Ramanathan is a sleazy, oily cretin. We need a new tax lawyer, Mukesh! We need to go to the newspapers and tell them we’re being raped by these politicians!” (p. 121). This is how things are going on in Delhi in the background of rising corruption after its failure in promoting tax-culture. India is “not America” (p. 121) where tax culture is well-established unlike India. Ashok does not know the ground realities of India and thinks that the global world's rules are applicable here as well. Balram writes to Mr. Jiabao that Americans honestly pay their taxes, and the government safeguards their social rights. In India, neither citizens pay their taxes nor does the taxation department perform its duties; things are at sixes and sevens due to hegemonic imperialist forces. Stork steals away tax in collaboration with politicians damaging the national treasury and industry. The coal enterprise is, therefore, “a rotten business” (p. 126). Ashok bribes ministers through tax-fixers to run his industry. He collects money from automatic machines at several banks for politicians in Delhi to exempt his coal industry from taxes (p. 244) but elites' tax-stealing is compensated by imposing heavy tariffs upon ordinary people (p. 245). The hybridized Ashok is crooked enough to misuse the values of both cultures for his own benefit. Ashok says to his American wife, Pinky:

The way things are changing in India now; this place is going to be like America in ten years. Plus, I like it better here. We've got people to take care of us here—our drivers, our watchmen, our masseurs. Where in New York will you find someone to bring you tea and sweet biscuits while you're still lying in bed, the way Ram Bahadur does for us? (Adiga, 2008, p. 89).

Tax-stealing reveals the underhand game played by the capitalists like Ashok in cooperation with the politicians and ministers who earn huge kickbacks, thus bringing loss to government treasury. Balram notices a buffalo pulling a cart filled with severed heads of the dead buffaloes which connotes the economic butchery of privileged class since the interests of capitalist forces (puller buffalo) compel the sitting government to strip off the skin of respectability of its already 'dead' citizens through economic policies (p. 256). The carter-buffalo's carrying of burden without a master symbolizes that the state has not only lost its writ but also agreed to the terms and conditions of global masters, neglecting the traditions and philosophy of its pioneers, Gandhi and Nehru. Globalization has ousted the blessings of local culture. Poor Indians receive direct effects of globalization or what Ashcroft *et al* (1998) call a new form of colonialism which has shifted its imperial center from Europe to America. The coal industry is rotten (p. 126) due to squeezing economic policies as the government is in the clutches of the WB and IMF. The de-generation caused downsizing of the mine workers and reduced their wages. Neoliberal projects have impoverished the local economy, culture, politics, and social norms. Despite the claims of progress, globalization has increased poverty, disease, depravity, restlessness, cultural defeat, nudity, and political instability in India. Indians have lost their dream of living a reasonable life because of heavy taxation. Farmers, Naxalites, labourers, and coal-mine workers are restless, unable to manage the daily provisions of life, and are on roads to protest these policies. Neoliberal culture has twisted the social fabric and cultural norms by projecting high-culture and Western ethos in Delhi, Gurgaon, and Bangalore. Moreover, the oppressed communities from

slums such as farmers (p. 134), laborers, and coal-workers protest Neoliberal policies and block roads (Adiga, 2008) before parliament house. 'The Great Socialist' politician cashes the occasion. He condemns state-policies and bursts out against exploitive capitalists. His hot words of revolution, fire, and blood cause "anger" (p. 303) in public.

4.2 Morbidding Effects of Exploitative Capitalism

India is a victim of inequality, dearth and discrimination due to market-rules (Acker, 1990) because globalization has increased inequity both at affluent centers of employment and the impoverished locations peopled with marginalized communities (Watters, 2012). The subaltern classes such as peasants are on roads with their demands against exploitation of hegemonic power structures, power centers and the elites who misuse power to subjugate the marginalized communities (Adiga, 2008). The inside of India is marred by illiteracy, backwardness, and ignorance. Buffalo, Stork, Raven, Wild Boar and the great Socialist represent gluttonous segment of society accomplishing the imperialist goals through bogus elections and monopolistic businesses (2008). Pinky's attitude towards Balram and the restlessness of Muslim community of Delhi reflect the politico-economic neo-empire's designs to hegemonize using neo-orientalist assumptions and presumptions. IDPs from Dark India must opt for professions like car-driving and home servants. Balram, for instance, becomes car-driver and faces discrimination in Light India's high-culture. Balram and other drivers are not allowed to enter the posh markets like shopping malls or visit the insides of the hotels because of their poor *economic capital*: "Every other servant thinks he can boss over" (Adiga, 2008, p. 200) but the drivers' sandals suggest that there is "no space for the Poor in the Malls of New India" (p. 148). The poor are not human beings in new India. A driver protests for not being allowed to enter the mall (p. 148). Neoliberal trends in the city cause cultural distance within culturally proximate people. Delhi, as per the measuring gauge of globalization, is the merger of global market in terms of a single-price payment that never happens. Incomes never increase by following rules of the game.

Slums stigmatize the enlightened face of Delhi's high culture impression. Victims of neo-imperialist forces become dotards just because of their too low living standards since they are "at the mercy of these [...]" (p. 269) neoliberal claims of progress and prosperity. Balram sees human beings squatting in a row "like a defensive wall" (p. 260) in open areas for defecation like animals; fragmentation has equated Delhi with Darkness. Life in Delhi is "no longer mattered to them" (Adiga, 2008, p. 261). Globalization [that first demolishes, then reconstructs], in Harvey's concept (2005), speaks half-truth in case of India where it has permeated through borders to accomplish economic agenda. Indian nation-state fails to save its weaker people from injuries because the politicians have accepted crushing neoliberal policies as terms and conditions to govern the country (Adiga, 2008).

Estrangement and homelessness are the maladies of cultural imperialism. Big cities like Delhi are estranged from their denizens since nobody knows "who's who in Delhi" (Adiga, 2008, p.122). The capital city, Balram notices, is the most enlightened face of 'Light' with central offices/institutions such as the parliament and the President House to accomplish "important business" of the state. The PM house and ministers' residences are the "showcase of the republic" (p. 118) but the city is "crazy" (p. 118) in that the posh residential areas like Defense, Greater Kailash, Vasant Kunj do not follow any "known system of logic" (Adiga, 2008, p. 119) as for their sequential numbering is concerned. Even names of the local roads are unknown to Delhian elite since they are alike in their shapes and circles around grassy lawns wherein "men are sleeping or eating or playing cards" (p. 119) showing how so-called progress of the city is licking its lips. This keeps people getting "lost and lost and lost" (p. 119) in its dazzling light. Two parallel cultures are practiced, differing between two groups: bourgeois and workers of Delhi. Affluence enhances

insensitivity, crookedness, and estrangement when people cannot reproduce or even sustain local cultural forms at the helm of enlarged mobilization as in Spencer & Wollman's concept (2002). The vitiligo-lips driver gives a course of survival in Delhi handling the inhumane trends of city's high culture:

[T]he roads are good, and the people are bad. The police are totally rotten. If they see you without a seat belt, you'll have to bribe them a hundred rupees. Our masters are not such a great lot, either. When they go for their late-night parties, it's hell for us. You sleep in the car, and the mosquitoes eat you alive. If they're malaria mosquitoes it's all right, you'll just be raving for a couple of weeks, but if it's the dengue mosquitoes, then [...], you'll die for sure. At two in the morning, he comes back, banging on the windows and shouting for you, and he's reeking of beer, and he farts in the car all the way back. The cold gets really bad in January. If you know he's having a late-night party, take along a blanket [...]. [That keeps the mosquitoes away too. Now, you'll get bored sitting in the car and waiting for him to come back from his parties—[...]—so you need something to read. You can read, can't you? Good. This is the absolutely best thing to read in the car (Adiga, 2008, p. 124).

Homelessness in Delhi, Balram sees, forces the "drivers" (2008, p. 120) to spend time outside in the cold wintry nights. When Balram drives Ashok and Pinky to Connaught place, he sees the drivers sitting around a fire burnt by cellophane on such a wintry night because they have no home to go to. The vitiligo-lips driver invites him to join them to warm him (Adiga, pp. 156-57), but Balram avoids getting his face scratched by fire. Similarly, two homeless "urchins" (p. 243) dance, clap, and sing at railway station on seeing Balram rejoiced at the departure of Mukesh for Dhanbad. They are confined to sitting, waiting, cooking, lying down, and sleeping on narrow footpaths or in dirty places. Inside the city is separated from the other side – outside of the dark egg (p. 139); the outer polished surface/ posh areas hold internal dark bowels/ backward areas laden with stinky "feces" (p. 15) of discrimination and sexual abuse. Balram's fellow drivers spend time in practicing folkways such as "chitchatting and scratching" (p. 149) their groin, reading murder or rape magazines, and developing chauffeur's habit of putting a finger in their nose and letting their minds go blank by yogic exercises like "*asana*" (p. 149). Economic and social polarization has brought along immorality, too. In one instance, the vitiligo-lips driver offers Balram that he could arrange women and foreign wine for his master. He asks Balram, "Have you thought about what I said, sweetie pie? Does your master need anything? Ganja? Girls? Boys? Golf balls —good-quality American golf balls, duty-free?" (Adiga, 2008, p. 147). This shows that the abusive practices are dominating in the economic field of culturally imperialized elite. The cultural capital of drivers/ working class under bourgeois norms is also at stake.

5. Conclusion

Neoliberal India is in the shakles of exploitative class system and capitalist relation. The exploitation is going on both in the Light and the Dark Indias; the capital areas are just accomplishing the imperialist designs of WB, IMF and American outsourcing companies i.e. the capital city is under the cultural subjugation of the Center-nation while the marginal places are under subjugation of the center of the marginalized center of India, if seen through Galtung's lens (1971). Inequity is the most deformed facet of human life since the line of fresh shit defecated by these IDPs/ workers points to the wafting stench of borderline drawn under global discrimination intensifying exploitation. The miserable plight under coercion is "even worse than Laxmangarh" (Adiga, 2008, p. 260) i.e. the Dark side of India. Balram notes the children squatting down in open areas of slums near Buckingham B (p. 261); these human beings are living life even worse than animals. The adjacent area stinking with industrial sewage has added up to the misery making the city environment quite morbid for living. At night hours, Delhi is frequented by

beggars who sell “books or statues or strawberries” (p. 160) along the roadsides. Neoliberal policies have left the choice open for individuals’ progress without caring which way do they adopt for progress. Adiga makes a political point here. When a child, in one instance, comes to Balam on a traffic signal and places before him the small statue of Buddha, Pinky and Ashok make fun of him telling him a “connoisseur of sculpture” (Adiga, 2008, p. 160). Their ironic expressions not only depress Balam but also the beggar child who is earning his bread. Neoliberal culture does not bother others’ feelings. This fragmentation exposes the reality of the capital city of a “glorious nation” (p. 18). Neoliberal experimentation fails to redress the issues of poverty and homelessness but aggravates inequality.

Transformed nature and structure of marginality under the planted models of inequality and chain of command in world economy, as per skeptics’ perception (Hostettler, 2010), is visible in the ridiculous proofs of progress reflected from “thin bodies, filthy faces” (Adiga, 2008, p. 120) of the denizens of Balam’s Dark India. Those village “hick[s]” (p. 119) are the victims of diseases like “typhoid, cholera, and election fever” (p. 98). Living “under bridges and overpasses” (p. 120), they are waiting for some Godot[s] of the Light who “roar past them” (p. 120) in the cars moving smoothly on the ultramodern roads of Delhi. Exploitation has snatched their right to vote for which they have gone mad since bogus votes are cast.

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Note: The article is derived from my PhD thesis entitled, "Neo-Imperialist Hegemony in South Asian Anglophone Fiction: A Study of Globalization"