

Rise by sin or fall by virtue: A Marxist study of class consciousness in *The white tiger*, and *How to get filthy rich in rising Asia*

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Abstract

The present research aims to investigate and describe the phenomenon of class consciousness by keeping in its center the lines of social stratification. The core of this study is to probe the nature of class consciousness permeating through the selected postcolonial texts; Adiga's *The White Tiger* and Hamid's *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* which are the primary source of data for the current research. It takes into account the rich and the poor divide which can aptly be illustrated by seeking guidance from the concepts of class and class consciousness manifested in the Marxist critical theory. The term class consciousness here implies the contents derived from the social choices which are pertinent to the class and on the basis of the references set by class consciousness the class members struggle to lead their lives. Additionally, the study tends to inquire whether the level of class consciousness attained by members of working class makes them eligible to escape from the shackles of class servitude or not. The selected texts have been subjected to close textual analysis. An extensive reading of the novels brings forth the outcomes which have been interpreted in the light of much celebrated Marxist concepts. The results vividly indicate that the class segregation and class consciousness thrive in Adiga's and Hamid's fictional expedition. It seems as if the characters gradually develop class consciousness and exercise it within their social circle. The contemporary period is under the spell of capitalism and globalization which certifies the segmentation of human societies on the basis of social class. This work can undoubtedly assist the cultural studies attempting to comprehend the pros and cons of social stratification.

Keywords: Class divide, Servitude, Class Consciousness, Freedom

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Introduction

The twentieth century has witnessed a number of conflicts. Some of them were based on ideologies and some disputes soon transformed into an imbroglio which openly saw the use of arms. The current scenario of the world is experiencing a widening gulf between classes. Socio-economic conditions have demarcated the world at large into two sections namely haves and have-nots. At the end of nineteenth century Marx and his friend Fredrich Engels put forward a theory concerning class struggle. According to this assumption the historical progression is

marked by a constant tug of war between the contending classes. The conception played a vital role in designing the affairs of the world at that time pertaining to its revolutionary nature. The global web of capitalism has entangled people across the globe by utilizing the services of institutions like IMF and World Bank etc. Perkin speaks of this manipulation in his ground breaking work *Confessions of an Economic Hitman* (2006). He informs the world about the surge of capitalism which aims to install imperialism in a much efficient manner.

Literary people are more sensitive towards the happenings taking place around them than the ordinary people. So, the researcher intends to choose the works of Aravind Adiga and Mohsin Hamid for purpose of comparing their literary pieces in an attempt to sketch the evolving picture of the developing societies. *The White Tiger* (2008) and *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013) have been selected to meet the end of this study. The texts are subjected to be analyzed by using the Marxist literary thoughts of class and class consciousness. These perspectives will help in scrutinizing whether the people living in modern times are aware of the economic discrimination or they are passive to the exploitative system of capitalism.

A critical review of literature

Tyson (2006) explicates Marxism in terms that it “reveals the ways in which our socio-economic system is the source of our ultimate experience”. Plekhanov (1894) calls Marxism a complete worldview and puts forward the conception of dialectical materialism to define it and Kautsky terms Marxism as a “comprehensive theory of evolution” (Petrovic,1983, p. 347). Marx (1970) in trying to elaborate his conception remarks “it is not the consciousness of man that determines their being but on the contrary their social being that determines their consciousness” (p. ii). Marx crafted a theory to change the world around him unlike other philosophers who only engaged in mere contemplation. Earlier Hegel and his followers were of the view that historical process transpires due to the dialectics in reason and in this way immaterial world which exists in thoughts becomes the basis for a material world. Marx opposes this conception of philosophy and opines that only real observable factors, social and economic conditions of a particular era tend to shape the world around us.

Marx makes an allusion of architecture to describe his philosophy. There is a base which manifests socio-economic relations and on it rests the superstructure which features the ideologies. This reference points out that culture and lives of individuals are nourished by the historical conditions of an era. Marxism criticized the European industrialism owing to its adverse effects and aimed to establish a class free society where the means of production and forces of production would be under collective possession.

The notion of class has remained crucial in Marxist writings and this can be taken as an impulse for his theory. *Manifesto of Communist Party* (2004) begins, “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle. Freeman

and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed” (p. 14).

It means that the progression of history is the result of a dialectical process going on between different classes of people. Marx (1981) highlights the divisions within capitalist society and elaborates that there are owners of capital, owners of labor power and owners of land and their source of income is profit, wage and rent respectively. Marx brings down the number of classes into two segments which are property less workers and owners of property. Marx (1969) also ponders on the nature of middle class for instance the small shopkeepers and petty bourgeoisie and regards them as being in a state of transition. He remarks “all these sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which Modern Industry is carried on” (p. 18). Thomson (1968) defines class as a phenomenon where “some men as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared) feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs” (p. 09).

In Marxian tradition class consciousness is a vital concept associated with class. The polarization between the antagonistic classes stimulates the members of a down trodden class to engage in a struggle for redeeming themselves from afflictions of oppressive state of affairs. In Marxist phraseology a class may induce consciousness under special circumstances meaning thereby a class in itself is transformed to class for itself. The concept of class consciousness is said to have two different interpretations in Marxist thought. For some critics class consciousness implies counterfactual or imputed characteristics of classes as collective entities which eventually derive them to pursue their own interests while other critics comprehend it as characteristics of an individual as members of a class which govern and regulate their lives. The view of class consciousness at collective level is harnessed by similar conditions of life along with the same objectives pursued by individuals. This notion is in harmony with Marx’s idea of a class that it is a social movement directed against the oppressive class. A class can identify itself in relation to other class by defining its objectives. For example in the scenario of proletariat the term class consciousness will imply awareness on the part of workers that bourgeoisie have fabricated exploitative conditions of life and the proletariat would have to league their efforts in trying to resist this tyranny. Ollman (1993) enlists five features of class consciousness. First is the subjective/objective identity as members of class. Subjective identity is the thoughts of a member of a class whereas objective identity means that an individual sees itself as a member of a class which is historically being determined. Secondly, members of a class must comprehend the mechanics of capitalism. Thirdly, they must realize their part in class struggle. Fourthly, they should embody solidarity with the members of their class and finally, they must manifest animosity on rational grounds against their antagonistic class.

In light of the second interpretation, class consciousness is the result of subjective choices and preferences set by the members of a class which determine the course of their lives. Wright (1985) in this regards states, “to study

‘consciousness’ is to study a particular aspect of mental life of individuals, namely, those elements of a person’s subjectivity which are discursively accessible to the individual’s own awareness” (Wright, 1985, p. 244). Consciousness includes a set of preferences, beliefs, ideas, observations and theories which is accessible to individuals awareness. So, in this regard class consciousness is a subjective process determining the choices set by an individual in leading his life.

Raymond William’s conception known as structure of feeling encompasses the idea of micro level class consciousness which can be analyzed, and described by using the social life of the characters. The underlying motive of such a study is to explore the thought process of characters regarding themselves and it further brings into its domain the perception of character which is established on observing other characters. At macro level the purpose of class consciousness is to determine whether the workers are organizing a collective movement to repulse their oppression or they fail to establish an efficient mechanism to fight for their rights. In this study the researcher intends to adopt the second interpretation of class consciousness. The aim is to scrutinize class consciousness of the protagonists of the selected texts by considering their preferences and choices which they make for themselves as the members of particular class in trying to lead their lives.

These theoretical constructs of class and class consciousness can be extended in relation to other literary perspectives. All sorts of discrimination which are addressed by literary theories emerge from class discrimination. So formalism or neo-historicism in the earlier decades of twentieth century and post colonialism, feminism, post modernism in the later part are somehow linked with Marxism. Milner (1999) refers to Stefan Collini, “In the frequently incanted quartet of race, class and gender and sexual orientation there is no doubt that class has been the least fashionable... despite the fact that all the evidences suggest that class remains the single most powerful determinant of life chances”.

Eagleton sheds light upon the perpetuating issues and unravels the short sightedness of western theorists by describing that they are swayed only by the issues related to sexuality and gender (p. 06). He goes on to demarcate the inclination from class to colonial or post-colonial domains and argues that these theoretical frameworks were illustrated as they were void of the concept of class. Eurocentric attitude linked class to the Western nationalist perspective and as far as the struggle of racialists is concerned it was not simply an anticolonial struggle but more appropriately it was a tug of war between the forces of Western capitalism and the laborers of the world also. Further in case of gender if men impose their world view on women as an ultimate source of experience simply because they are economically on a stable footing than their counterparts then this notion will fall within the boundaries of Marxist Feminism. In the current study the researcher has reserved the attention span to socio-economic perspective owing to the narrative of the text; moreover the research objectives paved the way for the researcher to focus dominantly on the issue of class in terms of economics. The researcher intends to investigate the rich and the poor divide which has delimited the study within the confines of socio-economic class.

An important point to grasp is that the researcher has highlighted the adverse effects of capitalism despite the fact that it is a dynamic process for accumulating wealth and it may stimulate entrepreneurial ventures; the reason primarily being the nature of the selected text. The authors of the texts have sketched the Asian society which is under the spell of global capitalism. The in-depth analysis of the text reveals that the residents belonging to the poorest parts of the third world lack the necessary resources for participating in this global phenomenon. This as a result may lead to the marginalization of bulk of population forcing them to constitute a dispossessed class. Eagleton (2003) addresses this issue and posits that multinational corporations are playing a dominant role in creating divisions and bifurcations and they also capitalize on the already existing incongruities to crush majority of people away from the center, they also assign people the status hinging on the peripheries and a great deal of people are unable to work and perform their function in such situation. To overcome this predicament people migrate from their homeland, shift elsewhere and there they are termed as second rate citizens (p. 18-20).

Pourqoli (2018) has analyzed *The White Tiger* (2008) by applying Judith Butler's notions of performativity and tries to ascertain that repeated acts can play their part in the construction of a person's identity. Kaya (2018) explores *The White Tiger* from the perspective of ambivalence. Balram in the early part of his career as a chauffeur seems impressed by Ashok's personality and tries to mimic his way but murders his own master towards the end of the text. Khan (2013) explores Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013), Shamsie's *The Burnt Shadows* (2008), Nadeem Aslam's *The Wasted Vigil* (2008), Mouenuddin's *Other Room Other Wonder's* (2009). He tries to present a transformed image of the Pakistani identity to the international community. Chao (2014) interprets *How to Get Filthy Rich In Rising Asia* as a satire on the people who are compelled to bear the weight of shattering dreams.

Research questions

Adiga and Hamid have illustrated the landscape of an Asian society which is changing rapidly due to the development in capitalism. Eagleton (2005) is of the view that in spite of the desire to get rid of proletariat they have not yet perished but only changed the form. Keeping this assertion in view the researcher attempts to find answers to the following questions;

- Do the characters possess class consciousness to experience the dividing line between the poor and the rich?
- Can the characters from lower strata break free from their class servitude?

Objectives

- To determine the level of class consciousness to experience the dividing line between the poor and the rich
- To ascertain the potential of the characters to break free from the shackles of class servitude

Methodology and plan of the study

The current study follows the parameters of qualitative research. As the researcher intends to carry out this study through the selected postcolonial texts, the method of Textual Analysis has been used. Textual Analysis seems appropriate because the more emphasis is laid on the language, symbols, and motifs of the texts. The dominant themes of class stratification, exploitation and relevant instances in accordance with the conception of class consciousness, throughout the text have been demarcated to meet this end. No considerable attention has been paid to the writers' biography and the context in which the texts were published. Because the methodology employed by the researcher may comply with the objectives of this study. Moreover, the researcher has considered the texts as an independent whole in themselves for probing the theoretical constructs of class and class consciousness.

The researcher has selected novel as a source of data because novel is a literary genre which narrates a story with multiple points of view and along with the story offers quite comprehensive commentaries through author's reflections embedded in the narrative. The two post-colonial texts have been selected to be incorporated in the study as they aptly foreground developing Asian societies. Adiga portrays Indian society which is being transformed under the wave of global capitalism and Hamid also sketches a burgeoning Asian society undergoing the trends and transformations of capitalism. It is to be noted that societies portrayed are experiencing ills of abject poverty and the characters are placed poles apart in terms of their socio economic class. The researcher therefore attempts to analyze whether the characters are conscious of the drastic developments and the yawning gulf in societal fabric. For this purpose the protagonists' lives have been scrutinized with the lens of class consciousness to register their impression regarding their circumstances.

Communist Manifesto (2004) begins, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild master and journeyman" (p. 14). Thomson (1968) defines class as a phenomenon where "some men as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared) feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves and as against other men whose interests are different from theirs" (p. 09). The present paper analyzes the concept of class consciousness as put forward by Wright (1985), "to study 'consciousness' is to study a particular aspect of mental life of individuals, namely, those elements of a person's subjectivity which are discursively accessible to the individual's own awareness" (Wright, 1985, p. 244). The underlying motive of such a study is to explore the thought process of characters in light of their values, beliefs, ideas, observations and preferences. Hence, class consciousness of the protagonists has been foregrounded by shedding light upon their psychological and emotional facets. The turbulent and heart rendering incidents which the characters encounter and the class struggle in which they are engaged for gaining momentum for upper social mobility complement their acute sense of consciousness. In spite of the similarities between the two protagonists there emerges a sharp contrast in their destiny. Balram, adhering to his class

consciousness comprehends the fact that he should adopt the means of the rich capitalist class to sustain his glory. On the other hand the other protagonist (You) due to his class consciousness struggles to alleviate his downtrodden status but when he achieves entrepreneurial heights he unlike Balram reaches up to his poor relatives which ultimately land him in the abyss of destitution.

Data analysis and discussion

The White Tiger (2008) is the first person narrative. The protagonist relates his bildungsroman flight from adversity to prosperity. Balram, who is the narrator of the text, early in his life is stripped of formal school education due to the poor condition of his family. He realizes the universal reality that the beginning of the life on earth has registered the tug of war between haves and have-nots. He begins working at a tea shop and the course of events makes him a chauffeur to a rich land lord's son. There Balram realizes the disgraceful attitude of people towards his own class and vows to avenge his class. It simply means that after gaining consciousness Balram is able to trace his path to liberty. Balram after having been deprived of the right to enjoy formal education continues to educate himself but in a different way. He listens to the conversations of the customers and imbues his mind with half-baked ideas concerning the world around him. The seed of seeking education might have been implanted in his heart by his own father, who stresses on his son's education and remarks, "all my life I have been treated like a donkey" (p. 30). His father and mother both die because of the scarce health care facilities available for the poor hence making the bifurcation of India into two polar opposites. "India is two countries into one. India of light and an India of darkness" (p. 14). The social markers like clothing, accent, dialect, food and geography also tend to divide people who are already a part of the bifurcated India. Balram segregates people on the size of their bellies. Things like liquor play their part in separating one breed of people from the other breed. He states that there are two categories of people, "Indian liquor men and English liquor men". (p. 73). As mentioned above, the proportion of bellies plays a significant part in segmenting people. Balram learns that the rich are able to digest everything and everyone who comes in their path while the poor owing to their lack of desire for material possessions remain helpless in the capitalist jungle. Balram has witnessed the cuts and whips on his father's body and he also sees the smooth texture of his master's skin and draws a comparison between them. "The story of a poor man is written on his body in a sharp pen" (p. 227) and on the other hand the body of the rich man is like a white cotton pillow of a superior quality. Balram makes his way to India's metropolis as a member of working class.

He witnesses there the dehumanizing ways of the world. He makes his way to the surrounding slums and contrasts them with luxurious life patterns of the rich. He even becomes a hostage to justice system of India after Pinky madam hits a child on the road as a result of her reckless driving. He again experiences the futility of justice system when a driver of his taxi company kills a boy on a bicycle. He remarks:

A man on a bicycle getting killed- the people don't even have to register the case. A man on a motor bike getting killed- they would have to register that. A man in a car getting killed- they would have thrown me in jail (p. 309).

These illustrations make it quite evident that Balram is fully conscious of sharp division present in the society and it is only after this realization that he sets out to redeem himself.

The idea of class based exploitation and protagonist's sense of class consciousness are conspicuous in the second text as well. Mohsin Hamid divides his characters along different socio- economic lines. *How to get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia (2013)* presents these divisions in an Asian society which is drastically evolving under the sway of global capitalism. The text manifests two different levels of protagonist's class consciousness. He experiences severe circumstances as a young boy when he is compelled to lead his life in sheer poverty. As a young man he also enjoys an entrepreneurial life style which has been bestowed upon him owing to his fertile consciousness. He begins his life under the shadow of precarious situations in a village, moves to the city, keeps on developing the consciousness and finally manages to attain success in the middle age. His sense of class consciousness allows him to relate to the elite class and paves the way for him to become a business tycoon. His process of gaining class consciousness about world initiates at an early age. He leaves the joys of youth in his native village and moves to the city where he imparts a helping hand to his family in accumulating finances. His siblings also move with him. His brother assumes the role of an assistant to a painter. His sister cleans the houses of rich people. The difference between him and his siblings is that he realizes the sharp division of the society. Later on, when he goes for getting higher education he sees that people belonging to his class are even denied the access to education and the elite class manages to attain satisfactory results by utilizing the wealth they have acquired "your university is exquisitely attuned to money" (p. 60).

Hamid deliberately employs the second person pronoun in his self-help book in attempting to provide room to his audience for associating their own lives with the plot of the text.

Your mother is suffering from thyroid cancer. Your father lacks adequate expenses to afford your mother's treatment. Your father begs his employer to support him for his wife's treatment. Your mother finally passes away and your student organization which has voiced claims to stand for the students belonging to lower middle class does nothing for you. It is here when you realize the real nature of such organizations. All these are tools in devising the mechanism for the rich to serve their own interests. Your interaction with the rich class further fortifies the walls of your class consciousness. "You" are willing to be a member of the club, where your beloved pretty girl enjoys a respectable status. "You" notice that the pretty girl has become a person of means. She can afford her own maid servant, her own apartment and her meetings with the rich further make "you" conscious of your

secondary status in society. “You” want to enter a club where the pretty girl is participating as a model reflects your consciousness. “You” are dressed in black and white given to you by your friend who is a waiter. “You are excited and nervous, but pleased by your appearance when you glimpse yourself in the mirror of your motorcycle, thinking your garb connotes wealth and class” (p. 83).

The pretty girl over the course of years manages to achieve success in modeling. She visits her native city and even invites “you” to see her. “You” are not allowed to enter in the building. It is only after the pretty girl talks to security on the gate, “you” are permitted to step in. The secondary status adds to your consciousness. The protagonist when starts his business at a small scale visits a shop-keeper as a prerequisite for his enterprise. There he has to endure insulting remarks. The protagonist knows that his plight can only end after having gained the momentum of an entrepreneur. He attains these heights and employs his relatives to work for him. He takes his meal in their company but at the same time sustains a peculiar entrepreneurial aura which separates him from the rest of the lot. He arranges a meeting with a bureaucrat and strikes a deal with him thus entering in a corporate world. His feelings at that time can be registered as: “You drive off, riding high in your SUV above hatchbacks and motorcycles, you start to hum, only the presence of your employees preventing you from bursting into full blown song” (p. 146).

The two levels of class consciousness are vivid in the protagonist as he toils from his youth to the middle age. He remains sensitive towards the economic realities permeating the world and triumphs in attaining a respectable status in the world of material possession.

The sense of class consciousness can be harassed from the standpoint of one’s class. As both the protagonists belong to the dispossessed class, they start their journey from the scratch. The tumultuous situations which the characters encounter give a fillip to their sense of consciousness. They get engaged in a number of odd jobs towards their road to success and it is only in these experiences that their acute faculty of consciousness exacerbates to the extent that the protagonists resolve in making preferences for themselves. These choices construct their personalities as the ones who are able to see through the fabricated societal milieu.

The White Tiger (2008) is the saga of an individual who bears the ills of a rigid class based society. Balram accepts the charge of righting the wrong done to him and to his class by the bourgeoisie who have means of production and dispersion at their disposal. He writes a letter to the Chinese premier in an attempt to provide him with the secrets to gain the heights of entrepreneurship. He expresses his devotion and reverence for the Chinese nation and says, “You Chinese are great lovers of freedom and individual liberty. The British tried to make you their servants, but you never let them do it” (p. 5). Thus signaling on the very beginning that he will shed light upon the tale of his own life and how he availed opportunities to break free from the fetters of slavery.

Balram shares different maneuvers which the elite employ to keep the people submerged in the pool of servitude. Hanuman who was the side kick of god Rama is the beloved god of people in the darkness. People are bound to their secondary status by using the religious mythology which is an effective tool in legitimizing the class bifurcation. Balram aptly remarks in this scenario “how hard it is for a man to win his freedom in India” (p. 19). The fort on the top of the hill maintains an enchanting secrecy for Balram. He ponders whether it was the Turks, the Muslims or the British who built that fort and concludes that India has always been subdued by the foreign powers. Slavery has been mixed in her soil and now after so called independence people are still experiencing slavery as the poor are under the command of the rich. Balram endeavors to alleviate his miserable condition by committing himself to acquire education. He realizes the worth of Iqbal’s saying “they remain slaves because they cannot see what is beautiful in this world” (p. 40).

Balram alienates himself from everything that reminds him of his past. He even shuns his own family when he starts working as Ashok’s driver. The driver who taught Balram to drive teaches him an important lesson to survive this world. He eludes this world to a jungle and asks Balram to roar in order to proceed in the capitalist jungle. It implies that a man should have sufficient means only then he will be able to experience liberty. Balram learns the ins and outs of the system when he is employed as a servant to serve Stork’s house hold. Mukesh argues that Balram is too young to serve them to which Stork answers “catch ‘em young, and you can keep ‘em for life” (p. 66).

Balram accurately uses the analogy of a rooster coop to describe the situation of the servants and concludes that these servants will not even escape the cage even if they are handed the key to unlock the shackles of servitude. Nevertheless Balram gradually ascends the hill to his freedom, gains Ashok’s trust and even starts manipulating him. “Has there ever been a servant-master relationship like this one? He was powerless” (p. 186). Balram drives Ashok to different hotels where he bribed politicians to excuse his family of the tax which they were supposed to pay. Ashok carried a red bag with him to bribe the elite class and Balram resolved to gain that bag and settle the affairs in order to live like a free man. Balram before going to sleep recites a couplet which meant that door to freedom was always open and I was looking for the key everywhere. Balram listens closely to the great socialist’s victory speech when he proclaims that the poor boy can rise to the occasion and become prime minister of India. He listens regarding the remarkable geography of Bangalore and finally writes to his grandmother “I cannot live the rest of my life in a cage” (p. 278). The letter in which he addresses his grandmother brings everything to light that Balram at that time had resolved to gain freedom. He soon seizes an opportunity and murders his master. He flees away to the south with the red bag which is important in helping him to start a new life as a free man. He sets up an outsourcing company named as The White Tiger Taxi Drivers and becomes a master to a number of servants. He enjoys the enchanting lights of chandeliers. He even thinks of being caught by the police but sums up that the life of freedom no matter how short it fills the heart with pleasure and the moment when

one could realize “what it means not to be a servant” (p. 331) is the essence of entire life.

An analysis of Hamid’s *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013) unravels the fact that dominant discourses which are at work in the society circulate several ideologies with the help of state sponsored apparatus to keep the tide of affairs in their own favour. Bourgeoisie who are in command of the infrastructure are present at the base of society fabricate the ideologies which promote culture and state apparatus for upholding the status quo. Holub (1992) voices this fact that the class which is in possession of state apparatus uses it to its advantage for shaping up the cultural practices and for consolidating the status quo. Hamid’s characters start their journey of class consciousness as they are exposed to brutal realities of the world in the early part of their life. The both “you” and pretty girl are tethering on the verge of destitution. They resolve to challenge the status quo by blurring the boundaries fabricated by the trend of global capitalism. *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013) registers the rise and downfall of the both pretty girl and “you”. They at one point in their life make it to the top of the society but for only to come crashing down. Pretty girl’s upward social mobility comes when she gets employed as an assistant at a beauty salon. Later she becomes a host at a cooking show, manages to set up her own boutique and establishes her chain of displaying international furniture. She surrenders her honor to the members of bourgeoisie so that they may impart her with the wealth and social standing for which she has longed throughout her childhood. Pretty girl meets “you” realizes that she has not earned sufficient money in the current years and thinks “she is aware that her future is shaky that she could end up impoverished, aged and solitary, an elderly lady in a single room” (p. 111). Pretty girl makes her way up in life but still she is being haunted by the ghost of her days spent in poverty and still the cloud of destitution perpetually hovers over her head. This is simply because she has not adopted the ways of bourgeoisie and adheres to philanthropic manners. Her fear of losing her gained status materializes in reality as she is robbed and her assistant dies. She dies in a solitary apartment where she has nothing and no one of her own.

In the same way “you” gets a push owing to the hard work, resolution and his desire to overcome odds. “You” climbs up the ladder of business world slowly and gradually. He receives death threats from the ones who represent bourgeoisie. Like pretty girl he also displays a philanthropic spirit and employs his relatives to work with him but they become a source of his downfall and also contribute in taking his company to the verge of bankruptcy. The protagonist suffers from an ailment related to heart and is put under arrest in hospital. All of his luxuries are stripped off him. He rents a two star hotel but finds it difficult to pay its rent and then lodges in an apartment where he finds the company of the pretty girl. He tries to cross the class boundaries and even does so but only for a short span of time. The establishment of the city launches an accountability campaign against him. The established Plutocrats make use of devious means to exclude him from their ranks and they do so with the help of state machinery. The downfall of the both “you” and pretty girl can be summed up in following words “You have always been an

outsider, and finally you have been wounded. It is only natural that you be sacrificed so that the rest of the herd may prance on” (p. 90).

Discussion

The narrative style of the both novels *The White Tiger* (2008) and *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013) allure the audience towards it by means of its impressionistic value which allows the reader to associate struggle in different spheres of life with it. *The White Tiger* written in the first person narrative is manifested in an epistolary tradition and illuminates the psychological, social and emotional facets of Balram’s life as he steadily climbs the hill of social hierarchy. The second text *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* employs a second person narrator and is composed in the genre of self-help book. It directly addresses “you” and imparts “you” with the series of steps essential for accumulating riches after gaining a sense of class consciousness. The protagonists of the both texts start their turbulent journey amidst hopelessness and sheer misery. The main aim of the self-help book is “to show you how to get filthy rich in rising Asia. And to do that it has to find you, huddled, shivering on the packed earth under your mother’s cot” (p.04). The both protagonists lack the joys of childhood ways. They remain aloof to the soothing symphonies of life because they both belong to the lower class and the bourgeoisie of their society own the instruments which create melodious symphonies. The both protagonists remain unnamed in the early part of their life which signifies that their identity construction is something not worth considering. Balram gets a name when he starts attending school. His teacher gives him a name. The second protagonist is referred as “you” because this technique directly involves the audience in the narrative. The both central figures start their life by seeking education which indicates that they are well aware of the role of consciousness in life. They start working to meet the expenses of their family. Balram has to quit formal education and is employed at tea shop. Whereas “you” becomes a DVD home delivery boy. However they keep on adding to their reservoir of class consciousness because they understand that “time is the stuff of which a self is made” (Hamid, 2013, p. 19-20). The both central characters are compelled to face the wrath of class based society as they belong to class of dispossessed. They cannot play their part in uplifting the stature of their respective families. Their mothers die because of the scarcity of health care facilities available for the poor. Balram comes to know that the doctors are another cog in the corrupt machine of capitalism as they collect salaries from the government and devote themselves to their private practice. “You” learns that the student organization which he had so zealously joined is nothing but a mechanism installed by the ones in power. They use these organizations for their own advantage. It may be noticed that the corrupt practices of the world turns the both protagonists cold towards their families. They don’t harbor the emotions of love for their near ones as “it dampens the fire in the steam furnace of ambition” (Hamid, 2013, p. 37). Balram sacrifices his own family in pursuit of his objectives and the course of events drives “you” away from the members of family. Regarding “you” ambivalence prevails in his attitude as he tries to run from his miserable past and at the same time employs his relatives to work

with him which ultimately leads to his downfall. Balram breaks coal at a tea shop and his brother wants him to continue this job. “You” is also distracted by a number of other things but “there are times when the currents leading to wealth can manage to pull you along regardless of whether you kick and paddle in the opposite direction” (p. Hamid, 2013, p. 54). Balram after being employed as Mr. Ashok’s chauffeur drives him to different hotels and shopping malls. These rides add up to his sense of class consciousness as he learns that the members of the lower class are barred from entering these buildings and only bourgeoisie can enjoy these luxuries. He like the pretty girl contemplates that he “must bridge a significant cultural and class divide to enter even the lower realms of the world of fashion” (Hamid, 2013, p. 51). He tries to dress up like Ashok. He wants the same golden head girls and he finally resolves to gain access to the red bag which Ashok has. The sixth step of becoming filthy rich is to work for your own self. “You” learns it after experiencing a sharp class divide in society. He knows that the path leading to wealth is full of impediments and one has to improve various aspects of his personality to reach there. Balram moves a step further and comments that all that matters is the proportion of your belly. The ones having big belly will succeed and the others will get eaten up in the capitalist jungle. One has to strip and push others to the peripheries for gaining central position. The both protagonists work diligently and manage to achieve success but at the cost of violence. The difference between them is that Balram unleashes his fury on Ashok and “You” gets death threats from the well-established business man. Balram sets up an outsourcing company of his own and “you” manages to set up a company of bottled water. The success story of the both characters validates this claim “Entrepreneurship in the barbaric wastes furthest from state power is a fraught endeavor, a constant battle, a case of kill or be killed with little guarantee of success” (Hamid, 2013, p. 140).

A sharp contrast to notice between “you” and Balram is that Balram is able to sustain his glory while “you” comes dashing down to the ground. Balram changes his name to Ashok Sharma; he becomes a reason for the murder of his own family kills Mr. Ashok, bribes the policeman and screws an already established taxi company for the sake of introducing his own outsourcing company. On the other hand “you” refrains from ill means. He remains apart from nefarious means and loses everything. The solution to this query is fairly simple Balram becomes the one with bourgeoisie while “you” sticks to the ties of working class and is silenced and termed other by the hegemonic powers.

Conclusion

The current research is based on the Marxist interpretation of the two texts namely *The White Tiger* (2008) and *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013). These texts describe the landscape of an Asian society which is gaining geo-political importance as the world moves on to become a global village. In the contemporary era wars are being fought on new economic fronts. This fact illustrates that the socio-economic conditions are the most effective tools for controlling the affairs of the world. In narrowing down this scenario of material conditions to the level of one particular society results in the segmentation of

society into different strata. Class is playing an eminent role in imparting the central or marginalized role to the people. Marx opined that the intermediary class petty bourgeoisie will sink into the quagmire of destitution and become one with the proletariat. Hence, leaving behind only two antagonist classes bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The interest based system of capitalism is keeping a strict surveillance on the economic system of the country and makes sure that the people are split into two halves where one segment of society is subjected to the whims of the dominant class. The phenomenon is fairly evident in “your” case. He strives to shift his class rather he tries to bridge the yawning gulf between the members of working class and the elite class and succeeds momentarily but ultimately succumbs to the rigid materialist system installed by the bourgeoisie and becomes one with the proletariat. He does not have even the capital to spend a life in a two star hotel. In fact he rents a single room from where he happens to find pretty girl who also suffers the same fate.

The textual analyses of the texts show that the characters manifested in the plot belong to two opposite classes. Balram and “you” are the members of working class and they start gaining class consciousness after facing the discriminatory attitude of the elite class. They both somehow break free from the chains of class limitations. The difference is that Balram attains and maintains his new class status and on the other hand “you” is stripped of his new class stature soon after he achieves entrepreneurial heights. The contrast between them only occurs because Balram adheres to prevalent capitalist terms and even alters his name after the name of his ex-employer. “You” refrains himself from utilizing the state machinery to fulfill his own objectives and does not become one with the corrupt practices of bourgeoisie. Hence paving the way for his own downfall and in doing so indicates the assertion that the dominant class uses state apparatus to maintain their hegemony.

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