

Impact of Cultural Productions on Identity Construction in Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*: A Postmodern Study of Identity

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Abstract:

*This article endeavours to bring out the impact of different cultural productions on identity construction in Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* by focusing on major preoccupations of postmodernism like mass media and commodity-consumer culture with the special reference to postmodernist theorists Baudrillard and Jameson's views about hyperreality and loss of unique self. Through indepth analyses of Adiga's main character, Balram Halwai, this article explores postmodernist's cultural break from modernist's idea of unique and stable identity. This study reveals the obscure complications of proliferation of kitsch and subcultures, the rise of television and active impact of its different genres (commercials, advertisements, the news, talk shows, youth soaps, etc) on the character's social and practical lives. It also deals with the impact of the computer culture like internet and computer games and the replacement of simulacra with reality, fashion with social codes, and needs with desires created by media in Adiga's world. In Adiga's postmodern society identity is replaced by multiple identities which are creating depthlessness and flatness in the life of people and Balram is a resident of such a society where nothing is real unless it is represented through the lens of camera.*

Key words: The White Tiger, Identity, Postmodernism, Cultural productions, Commodity, Consumer, kitch, Subcultures, Simulacra, Depthlessness

INTRODUCTION

Identity is kaleidoscopic in nature on which different patterns of identity are to be found in random orders that keep on changing. There is fragmentation of the self in postmodern culture which has replaced modernists' concept of the alienation of the subject. The subject is fragmented because there is no depth, no roots, no affect and no reliable source to which the self can define itself. A traditional view about identity as stable and homogenous is no more prevailing. Modernism has been replaced by postmodernism due to its emphasis on the death of the subject or the end of individualism. Modernists were concerned, to some extent, about the formation of private identity and unique individuality. They believed that a man with his own unique identity and style can form the vision of the world. But today the postmodernists believe that the idea of unique personality and private identity is a thing of past. There is no individual, as individual subject is dead. Individualism is itself the production of multiple ideologies and various cultural productions. There is another postmodern view which thinks that unique identity is not only a thing of past but also a myth as there is no autonomous self or identity, it does not exist at all (Sarup 34). Postmodernists deconstructed the identity concepts, the concepts related to our inner or underlying essence. They deconstructed the idea of a stable core of self, the idea of our inner or underlying essence. They call into question the romantic concept of self as stable and homogenous. Postmodernism delegitimizes the myth of stable identity and autonomy of culture. Identity and culture are in constant

dialogue with each other. Identity and self has interconnection with race, class, religion, culture as well as its mass productions. Self and identity are although slightly different concepts but postmodern critics find a link in them. They take identity as the performance of the self. The process of self construction is affected by different cultural productions which play a vital role in our identity construction. There is an external force which always has great impact on internal self-development. There are varieties of cultural realities which collect around peoples personal life trajectories including religion, family history, occupation, language, media and advertisements which keep on increasing complexity in our culture and lead people towards shifting and fragmented identities. Self is not autonomous entity but part of a dynamic culture which keeps on changing under the influence of multitude of cultural productions therefore identity of the people is also shifting and unstable.

Thus our individual identity is not merely a product of our own desire and will but also a product of a culture to which we belong. Our identity reflects as well as defines the cultural milieu of the time in which it exists. This relationship is constitutive as well as dynamically unstable. Another postmodern critic Baudrillard argues in his book *Simulacra and Simulation* that our is the lost cause and we are living in a society which has lost its contact with the “real” and nothing left but mere representations and we are brazen out by mere precession of simulacra and fascination with the disappearance of the real. There is no distinction left between real and the representation (56).

As identities are social and cultural constructs therefore, our identities and our perceptions are shaped and reshaped by social institutions and cultural products. Cultural products can be defined as “products that derive from a creative and/or intellectual act” (Pitsaki). Hence, cultural products includes

films, cinema, literature, television, radio, CDs, DVDs, paintings, music, dance, movies or television programmes, magazine, newspaper, a video game, internet, an electronic publication, and all type of cultural industries products. We cannot measure the enormity of the cultural changes that have been taken place in postmodern age due to development at mass level. In daily life of individual more changes has been experienced in postmodern era when electronic media, internet, television, cinema, mobile phones, etc. were introduced. Commodity production has been penetrated in all spheres of life including our clothing, food, furniture, and other areas of life. With this kind of cultural changes a new society emerged which is labelled as consumer society, capitalist society, post-industrial society, media society and so forth with the dissemination of advertising, media and television.

The present culture has become in real sense an automobile culture. With the growing mass culture objects are also seen as fragmented and unstable and subject for multiple meanings. Adiga in his novel deals with the obscure impact and rise of all these cultural productions. Through his main character Balram's autobiography he brings out the impact of advertisement and computer culture like internet and Tv ads on identity formation. All these productions in fact can be referred as subcultures which are penetrating in peoples mind and body replacing simulacra with the reality. The analytical study of Adiga's characters lay bare the fact that how people in these subcultures invent their identities which are structured, incomplete, and unfinished and always remains 'in a process' (Sarup xvi). He criticizes how the technology and mass media directs the life of people in postmodern world. Balram is also a postmodern man who has become more and more reliant on technological world. The target of Adiga like postmodernist writers is not only the bourgeoisie society but also as, Steven Wiesenberger claims, "the contemporary mega bureaucracy and

its blindly progressive 'information society' (6). The culture portrayed in Adiga's novel is a technoculture and a media culture. Balram is inhabitant of such a post-industrial society which is best labelled as 'consumer society' and thought as an 'information age'. Adiga presents such a society to explore a cultural break from modernist ideas of progress, absolute and authentic knowledge, truth, and a stable and homogenous self. In this society depth is replaced by flat or multiple surfaces. Thus a sense of depthlessness and flatness is prevailing in post-industrial society. This depthlessness is linked to other losses: the withering away of nature, the decline of the historical, consciousness and the 'waning of effect'.

Baudrillard emphasizes on hyperreal society which is dominated by images or representations taken as real due to multiple influences of technological media and mass productions (as in Adiga's society). Depthlessness has so much penetrated into postmodern man's life through mass media that any sense of real has been lost and nothing is true unless it is represented by images of internet or Television. In *The White Tiger* Balram defines his own personality through an image which is saved on his laptop downloaded from internet. Thus there is a decline in coherent and unified identities as every identity is a result of some cultural production. As Baudrillard insists, our identity construction is based on images and media representations. Commodified aesthetics is a factor that determines the path – the direction of an individual what he will become – what he will actually do with his being. Balram used to drive a "moody" (Adiga 80) Honda City but in actuality this is the car that drives and directs Balram's life.

Adiga attacks on ideas of cohesion, essence, and fixity about identity. For him identities are social constructs. He uses the invasive capitalist cultural industry to challenge its culture's own commodification processes within the novel. The

world in which Balram moves is a materialistic, industrial, discursive and complex network of elite and various mass productions. Who am I? What is my real identity? How I can find my real identity from a number of options? These are the questions which are the real trauma of postmodern man. The postmodern man is unable to find his or her real identity as there are multiple identities and a world full of simulacra. In a world full of representations and simulacrum it is very difficult for anyone to find what is real?

The White Tiger is a story of a man who has to create his identity in a world where everything is commodified. Adiga's *The White tiger* is the critique of the alienating effect of this commodified culture on the identity construction of the people. Impurity in culture leads towards regrettable impurities in self-identity. In the same way, the more homogenous the culture the more uniform will be its subjects or cultural objects. Balram Halwai, the narrator also has no fix identity. He has fragmented identity which keeps on changing from time to time. First he was Munnah then he is given another name by his school teacher i.e. Balram. After that he is given another name that is "The white tiger" (35). He further points towards his identitylessness by saying that, "There will be a fourth and a fifth name too, but that's late in the story" (35). Finally he becomes a murderer and changes his identity from Balram to Ashok Sharma by killing his master Ashok. He himself feels the loss of his identity from time to time as he accepts that he has given birth by government. He has no actual identity of his own. This is the result of disoriented and fragmented culture where everything is judged according to the money and the class of the people. He is a part of a culture where all is *capital*. "There was money in the air" (53) in which he breathes. Where we find no logic of anything. It is a postmodern world where nothing is certain. Everything is commoditized even human beings. There is a death of 'grand narratives' in such a culture

which were the very basis of people's identity construction. Thus everything is chaotic and shattered. Identity is a result of historical, political, cultural, religious, and most importantly economic developments. It is subject to continual change. Identity shifts according to shifting realities of the society. This leads towards identity crises shaking the very self-image of the people.

Adiga like postmodernist critics is also confronted by "dilemmas of the self" (Giddens 56) influenced by cultural and social productions. Fragmented and shattered identities in postmodern world are the major theme discussed in Adiga's *The White Tiger* and the postmodern society, he has portrayed, is itself split, fragmented, pluralistic and episodic in its nature. This fragmentation is the result of mass society, technological and industrial society as well as of different social institutions. In Adiga's postmodern world everything is on the mass scale – there is mass media, mass productions, mass identities, mass communications, and mass organizations. Our personal identities and relationship in this mobile society are multivalent, unstable, dynamics, and ephemeral. Adiga's postmodern man, Balram, does not possess one dimensional personality with a single mindedness and taste. But his feelings and tastes keep on changing as a result of the effects from the outside environment on his self. Baudrillard associates this fragmentation with mass media and hyperreality and globalization. He puts forward the idea that the postmodern world is a world of simulations and hyperreality from which any sense of the real is lost. He associates postmodern life with the cinematic life. He states that even outside the movie theater the whole world is cinematic (Baudrillard, America 44). This cinematic world appears so real that we loss any contact with the real and as a result of it our personalities are shattered and fractured. Individual's fractured selves realize

that they are living in a heterogeneous world and they have to suffer the tribulations of life.

Due to the impact of this cinematic world people have mindless fascination with the things presented in movies, film songs, cinema, television programmes etc. Balram has a strong fascination for the chandelier “just like the one they used to show in the films of the 1970s” (Adiga 7). Hindi films shown in cinema are actually infusing a fanciful and illusory world in their minds. An Indian village is incomplete without “blue-movie theatre” (23). There is also a cinema in Balram’s village, showing “two-and-a-half-hour fantasias ... featuring golden – haired women from America or lonely ladies from Hong Kong...” (23). Cinema is like a computer game as different images are taken from the world outside and put together by using various editing techniques guiding viewers thoughts and emotions. It makes the artificial to look real. So cinema is acting as a generator of images creating its relationship with the viewers to mould and shape their identity. Balram Halwai has also joined such people and “went to see one of these films” (23). He becomes a part of such a cinematic postmodern world in which he starts inventing his identity from his early childhood days. In his later life he is obsessed with the idea of freedom and personal identity in a postmodern world of technology and mass productions.

The character of Balram reflects the need of a man to give some shape to his infinite number of absurd identities. He does not have a permanent identity but different, multiple and shifting identities. The major cause behind this multiplicity of Balram’s faces is the powerful world derived by technological and cultural products. He is now a successful entrepreneur who owns “the white tiger technology drivers” (321). He successfully becomes the representative and owner of this technologically driven world.

The setting of the story is the postmodern city, Delhi, which has its own psychological effects on its residents. Nick Bentley terms this phenomenon as “psychogeography” (11). Delhi city reflects an environment of restlessness and uneasiness which is driven by mass media and various cultural products. The environment of the city itself is transitory and unstable where “civilization can appear and disappear” (Adiga 281) at any moment then how its inhabitant can possess stable and unified identity. Balram’s identity is a mosaic of different contexts, experiences, incidents, and roles that he performs as he moves in Delhi city. His self can be defined by countless influences of an electronic culture in which he moves. Lyotard describes the self by using electronic and mass communication as “a metaphor, as “nodal” points through which messages and experiences pass” (138). Thus Balram lacks any coherent or unified self due to these ever changing messages which shape, and reshape his identity throughout his whole life. It shows that identity in postmodern world is not stable but it keeps on changing over time, mainly due to local circumstances instead of longer structural situations. The crisis of identity is seen as a result of wider progression of change in mass society leading people towards simulations and hyperreality. In pursuit of order, to get some positivistic structure in a mass produced society we are actually moving inversely towards madness and chaos.

Mass productions have also generated what we call as ‘mass society’. Mass society has made us a member of a society which is dominated by the idea of mechanics and technologies. Mass society is a comfortable society which has made its population passive, apathetic, indifferent, lazy, and atomized. In such a society people have lost any sense of loyalties, bonds and affiliations to their fellow beings rather they are just concerned with their own interests and pursuits. Mass society is a ‘knowledge society’ or information society. In such a society

we make sense of the world around us by associating real objects and ideas with signs and symbols which are referred as 'referents'. Mass media is playing the major role in interpreting our life through media lens. In media society signs have become real and thus we have entered the era of hyperreality. Television, radio, newspaper, internet are all leading us towards this world of hyperreality. Balram is also a member of mass society in which any ties or associations are debased and where he does not have his real image but an image scanned through internet and media. Balram's photographic image is not an original image although it refers to some outside reality. This image is the distorted image of Balram's real image. Balram's poster published by police is again the manifestation of spatial identification which cannot capture the real essence of the man. His photograph on the poster is "blurred, blackened, and smudged by antique printing press ... and transferred onto the computer screen, ... reduced to pixels, just an abstract idea of a man's face" (39). The police poster of Balram depicts a distorted image of Balram Halwai. Poster of Balram fails to recognize his real self and multiply the distance that must be crossed to get recognition. This is further enhanced by the laptop image of Balram. His laptop image introduces the concept of alienation. This alienation leads towards disoriented concept of identity. Identity is supplanted by the experience of its own otherness and fragmentation, The self which is presented in his own words tends to be entirely different from the self represented in the language of the police poster. This leads to the self adopting the image of alienated identity which is no more his real identity. As he himself negates his poster image, "Well that's not *exactly* anymore, sir... 'thin' and 'small' ha! I am in better shape these days! 'Fat' and 'potbellied' would be more accurate now" (13). Now he has become a different man. Thus the 'self' depicted as imprisoned in the frozen, immobile, and artificial image of his

poster is more mobile and flexible than the poster image. This also emphasizes on the openness and the fluidity of the identity as changing and always moving and evolving through a process. A unique characteristic of the Adiga's world is the proliferation and growth of electronic means of communication within and across the Indian society. Balram's society can also be referred as a post industrial society due to its technological innovation. The society in which Balram lives is full of different technological inventions. He is surrounded by the Honda City car, Mercedes, mobile phones, Macintosh silver laptop, computers, refrigerators, etc.

The impact of technological media especially television on social experience and cultural perceptions is also a crucial postmodern phenomenon. According to Baudrillard, "You no longer watch TV, it is TV that watches you (live)" (Simulacra and Simulacrum 31). Hence, we find the total control of TV on our daily life as well as dissolution of our lives into a world of hyperreality created by TV. Adiga portrays a world which is dominated by a number of electronic tools and electronic means of communication. Balram's society is also such a society in which these electronic means of communication fills masses life with a confused mixture of images and signs. This is enhanced through the TV channels that are increasing in numbers day by day. The Television screens are becoming more and more flat which is increasing depthlessness and flatness in the life of its users. The television set with a remote handset allows the people to flick from one channel to another just like magazines pages, just stopping to look at the pictures without completing a programme or any film from beginning till the end. Most importantly television has played a havoc role in mutation of our everyday perception, as we use our mental image bank created through television in our mind to interpret any person, situation, or event in a real world. We have false pretension that we know the difference but we feel disappointed when we

do not live to those idealized forms of images presented on TV. By watching TV, even for an hour, we are likely to experience a myriad of images than a person of non- industrial society could experience in his whole life.

Adiga also asserts that television is another source which drives the Indian people away from their real identity and enters them into a world of simulacra. Indian people are imprisoned by these simulations but they are not aware of it, they are just waiting for a war to liberate their selves from a life of slavery. But revolution is not possible by merely sitting in front of the TV and doing nothing. Adiga through the character of Balram vocalizes the situation of India's people blinded by TV and media:

An Indian revolution? ... That will never happen...the book of your revolution sits in the pit of your bell, young Indian. Crap it and read. Instead of which, they're all sitting in front of colour TVs and watching cricket and shampoo advertisements. (Adiga 304)

Thousands of people of the world although they are living a miserable life, they do not have drinking water, discipline, sewage system, public transportation, and electricity but they have a television set in their houses. What does it symbolize then? It symbolize that television has become the basic necessity of their life. It exemplifies the postmodern emphasis on love for appearance and surface in postmodern culture. Television's hyper – ephemerality and instability has also become a part of postmodern man's life. People have become addicted to media and television.

The falsification of truth through media has become a common day activity. Media possess the power to mystify the people and to impose its own truth upon the outside reality. In the present postmodern world truth cannot be heard over media babble. Media creates an elusive and delusive world of simulations. Media is nothing more than a marvelous tool for

destabilizing the truth and the real. We do not use media for information or communication but for entertainment but behind this entertainment we find perversion of truth. Adiga is a first rate diagnostician who has skillfully portrayed the postmodern scenario in which media is creating half baked masses, those who cannot distinguish between truth and falsification. Through the character of Balram Adiga vocalizes the role of media in the production of half- baked people:

All India Radio news bulletins, things that drop into your mind, like lizards from the ceiling, in the half-hour before falling asleep - all these ideas, half formed and half digested and half correct, mix up with other half-cooked ideas in your head, and I guess these half-formed ideas bugger one another, and make more half-formed ideas, and this is what you act on and live with. (11)

The news on radio and television are half truths and half lies and the mixture of these half true and false ideas generates half- baked people with half formed ideas in their mind. And they live their whole live according to these half formed ideas and principles. It is an age of illusion, misapprehension and disinformation. The inhabitants of this age are wearing "black glasses and masks on their faces" (133) of fake identity. These black glasses and masks are the signs and symbols that are created by film, TV, radio, advertisements, and other cultural productions preventing them from reaching reality or grasping their real identity. It is creating fatalistic anxiety among people which results in social breakdown and identity loss. In Adiga's world media is just increasing the misery of the people through publishing news in newspapers and broadcasting through news channels where opposite ideas and multiple world views only create confusion and nothing else, " Muslim men kept adding newspaper to the ground, ... and the line of diseased eyes, raw wounds, and delirious mouths kept growing" (49). Thus, media

or newspapers are not the source of information but disinformation and misery.

The situation is made much worse by the development of CDs and DVDs of films and music songs. It has further disrupted the nonlinear flow of programmes and songs more than Television. CDs allow us to make our own sequence of events and their forward quality also provides a fast means of shifting the time experiences which never remains linear. Balram used to play English song's CDs in his master's Honda City car to pass the time during traffic jam, "I put the CD into the player ... ten minutes passed ...I replaced Sting with Enya, I replaced Enya with Eminem" (240). Thus non linear flow of events and disrupted objects to pass the time have become the part of postmodern man life. This is purely postmodern experience in which sequence of events and time are controlled by the people – viewer or the listener. A culture based on these hyper – ephemeral and instable productions can never be stable or unified. It has become a cultural desert without any fruitful activity producing nothing of any cultural value.

The internet is further maximizing the stream of information driving people towards creating a bank of private information without any authenticity or reliability. Internet is another par excellence postmodern cultural phenomenon. Through clicking on the mouse individual engages his or herself with various cultural productions and creates a sense of illusion of controlling, running, or managing the world. There is no authenticity of anything written on internet as internet pages are not authorized as no one cares who has written them. Internet again a pseudo-modern cultural phenomenon as it makes the individuals to participate by requesting to give their feedback or to add more information to websites like Wikipedia etc. Balram by sitting in Bangalore is running his business through advertisements in newspapers and on internet. But the

things that we see on internet or television are never so real as they pretend to be.

Through internet and media knowledge is itself become a commodity, a thing to be sold and used for material gain. The internet makes people to view hundreds of images of an individual in a second and one cannot recognize which is the real image of that person. It also facilitates the people in the other corner of the world to view from home events and people on the other side of the world. Balram tries to relate Mr. Ashok's girl friend Uma with a European actress that he has seen on internet and in advertisements, "I found her photo and name on Google ... exactly like Kim Basinger! She was tall and beautiful ...just like in the shampoo advertisements!" (218).

Balram Halwai is the representative figure of fragmentary and flexible identity in a world of simulacrum. He invents a new identity day by day in a world dominated by Baudrillardian simulacra. He seems largely a reflex of mass society in which he is suffering from identity problem due to social and economical disturbances. As far as he goes, he is right, as there is much in a society to give a pain to him. He does not have a clear sense of his position in the society that why and what for he is supposed to work as a coal breaker, why he can't live like a white tiger. He can also be referred as 'angry young man' who is frustrated at the present scenario and who does not have clear sense of anything. He has a fragmentary self as he is not fully aware about his own motives that why he has really murdered his master. He says, I myself don't understand these things ... I cannot be certain that the story, as I will tell it, is the right story to tell ... I cannot be certain that I know exactly why Mr Ashok died" (113). He is not certain about what he has been doing and why he has done something. He also makes political points about the postmodern scenario.

He has given different type of identities from outside. Every time he gets an identity which is socially defined. He himself tells to Chinese Prime minister, "I owe democracy a lot – even my birthday, in fact" (96). He further enhances the theme of identitylessness when he answers some questions asked by a school inspector, "Name?...Balram Halwai...Age?...No age...No date of birth" (96), in short, no identity at all. He who does not own his own self. He is deprived of subjectivity and has to follow the rules and commands of others. There are millions of people who are homeless and deprived of identity. In postmodernism identity is defined by few people, institutions and by media. Balram tells in the middle of the story that, "I got a birthday from the government" (97). Cultural dominance of political relationship produced a form of ontological exposure. The self is now very far from the spiritual heaven that the romantic took it to be and is instead the vulnerable site of historical and social conflicts. Adiga represents through key images the psychic nakedness and the political and social conflicts of Indian society. He presents the image of 'rooster coop' to represent the condition of the people who are caught in complexities and miseries of the world. This 'rooster coop' represents the helpless people from low cast which can do nothing to liberate themselves from their cage. Balram in an allegorical way represents the miserable life of such people.

This can be illustrated by manipulative influence of media on Balram's life. Balram lives in a world full of signs and symbols where ones needs and desires are determined by an outside power and media is a most powerful tool. There are no objective truths of our needs and desires or interests only fascinations with signs and symbols presented through media. It is a world dominated by advertisements, internet, media, cinema, pop music etc. Media does not only relay information for us but also defines ourselves to us. Media tells us what are our needs and what we should desire. In fact media directs our

whole life from child rearing to our end. The “golden girl” image which the poor people of Balram’s world adore is represented by media as the standard of beauty.

In his early life in Delhi Balram was very much influenced by the magic of these advertisements as he is also a member of a consumer market which presents individuals with identity tools, through the medium of advertisements, to change their identity as ‘skin-whitening creams’ or ‘hair dye colours’. The prostitute in *The White tiger* changes the colour of her hair by using hair dye colour to deceive her clients by presenting herself as a foreigner instead of an Indian. Balram has been deceived by such a girl. He was shocked when he came to know that the original colour of her hairs is black not ‘golden’. “This, I shouted at him, pulling the girl by the hair, is not real gold. The roots were black! It was all a dye job!” (235). He is actually fascinated by ‘golden hair girl’ through the advertisement and media representations which represent ‘golden hair’ as the symbol of real beauty. He asks from the man who provides call girls to have a girl with golden hair. He says, “I don’t care. She just has to have golden hair – like in the shampoo advertisements” (228). Balram also thought to use skin whitener creams to make his complexion fair, “I’m of half a mind to try one of those skin- whitener creams they have launched these days so Indian men can look as white as Westerners” (12).

There is again a shift from postmodernism to post- post modernism. Post – post modernism can be referred as pseudo-modernism which has further problematised the question of real identity. In the postmodern age the readers, spectators or the listeners are passive recipient of representations presented in the form of fiction or non -fiction text, TV images or radio sounds. But Alan Kirkby says, “Postmodernism is dead and buried” (170), as focus has been shifted from passive reception to physical participation of the spectators. This is happening by

casting votes to reality TV shows, like *Big Brother*, *Big Boss*, or on contemporary news programmes through telephone calls, emails or text messages through mobile phones. Balram also gets inspiration of murdering his master by reading a cheap magazine "Murder Weekly, Rupees 4.50" (Adiga 125) containing stories about "Murders, Rapes, Revenges" (125) with such titles "A Good Boy Never Goes To Waste". These stories are very "popular reading among all the servants of the city" (125).

We also find Jameson's ideas about the loss of individual identity in an age of hyperreality in Adiga's world where individuals are living an illusionary life without any sense of reality. They have lost their real referential and moving in a world of hyperreality where they can't find any true justification of their present situation. Adiga has made it clear that there is no fix or coherent identity but multiple identities created through the proliferation of kitsch and mass media. Mass culture – television, radio, newspaper, video games, live concerts, magazines, books – is playing a detrimental role in the identity formation of masses. Representations and images are controlling the public life and shaping their identities. By consuming multinational cultural products we are becoming passive consumer of mass culture. There again we witness the dismissal of grand narratives. This is a reality and a fact of life which every generation of India and other such nations have to confront. Balram tries to fulfill the gap between his inside and outside reality throughout his life but he fails in his attempt as he is a part of a consumer culture dominated by hyperreality.

Almost every idea of Baudrillard seems to be true as we, the resident of the postmodern society, has left modernity behind and moving in a new society where the grand narratives and old categories no longer exist. Baudrillard association of this derealization of postmodern society with the representation of things through television, film and advertisements has been proved by Adiga in his novel. The character analysis of Balram

in *The White Tiger* reflects the essential postmodern view of identity constructed as a result of different cultural products. By using the technique of stream of consciousness and discontinuity in his narrative, Balram reflects the experience of fragmented and split subject experiencing unstable identity in a world where there is no order. Adiga's novel promotes the postmodern understanding of the reader and deals with the most crucial problems of the contemporary India as well as of the whole world. This research on the aspect of identity construction opens a new vista through the study of Adiga's *The White Tiger* with a postmodern perspective. This study is significant as it challenges the traditional view about identity that it is fix, static and linear in favour of the postmodern view that identity is not static but dynamic and non linear.

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