

**THE CASTE AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION
IN ARAVIND ADIGA'S NOVEL *THE WHITE TIGER***

THESIS

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to Obtain the Strata One (S1) Degree*



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ABSTRAK

Sudiharto, Tryani Novera. 2011. *The Caste as A social Construction in Aravind Adiga's Novel The White Tiger* (Unpublished Thesis) Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris FBS – Universitas Negeri Padang.

Skripsi ini akan membahas tentang *The Caste as A Social Construction* dalam novel karya Aravind Adiga *The White Tiger* (2008). Masalah yang dibahas adalah bagaimana sebuah sistem stratifikasi sosial di India yang dinamakan kasta. Sistem ini mengatur masyarakat yang hidup di dalamnya dengan fungsi yang sangat spesifik dalam semua aspek kehidupan. Sehingga mereka hidup dengan batasan-batasan yang baku. Tujuan penulisan skripsi ini adalah untuk mengevaluasi sistem ini agar sampai pada kesimpulan bahwa sistem tersebut di konstruksi oleh masyarakat itu sendiri untuk berbagai kepentingan diantaranya dalam bidang ketenagakerjaan dan ekonomi. Metode yang digunakan dalam analisa ini adalah *context-based* dan *text-based interpretation* dengan menganalisa karakter, plot (konflik) dan setting. Skripsi ini menggunakan teori Konstruksionisme Sosial yang didasarkan pada konsep Peter L Berger dan Thomas Lukman serta Self Reliance yang dikemukakan Waldo Ralph Emerson.

Hasil yang dicapai skripsi ini adalah setiap orang yang hidup di dalam konstruksi sosial dari sistem kasta ini menyadari bahwa mereka tidak perlu hidup dengan mengikuti aturan-aturan baku tersebut. Hal ini ditunjukkan oleh karakter utama pada novel ini, yaitu Balram Halwai sebagai refleksi dari salah seorang yang berasal dari kasta rendah tetapi mampu memiliki kehidupan sukses dengan usaha yang ia lakukan sendiri. Ia menunjukkan bagaimana sistem kasta itu memang dikonstruksi masyarakat saja. Sehingga setiap orang dapat hidup tanpa harus dikontrol oleh aturan sosial yang memberi hambatan untuk sebuah keberhasilan.

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Last but not least, the writer hopes this Thesis can be useful for the readers.

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Tryani Novera Sudiharto

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Each society has its own social values and culture including the system of stratification. One of the unique systems is the caste in India. This system has been practiced since the ancient age and has arranged the society to live in a vertical stratification. The stratification divides the society into some classes as well as their function. It has been held tightly by each generation and continued to the following generation. Thus, the regulation affects many aspects of life such as education, occupation, economy and leadership.

Historically, the origin of this system is still obscure. Though it is identified to a certain religion, there are other factors that gave significant influence in its growing to this recent decade. The factors come from the society itself and the influence of the colonization. Birodkar (1998) states that beside of the religious dogmas, the feature of heredity of the system had made it could survive over thousands of years in an almost unchange form. Moreover, the heredity is also involved by the identification of the caste through genetic form which means that everyone accept the caste from their parent. In contrast, Jacob (2009) states that there are many documentations showed that the caste system is a social construct in the absence of any real genetic differences among caste and it is similar to race, which is also a social concept without genetic basic.

Furthermore, Ibbetson in his 1881 census of Punjab (in wikipedia, 2008) argues that the Indian caste system was more social than a religious institution. Consequently, caste is no longer a fixed rule which can determine someone's life or destiny. It was a social construction that is flexible toward the movement of the society itself. Recently, low caste society who is aware of this fact starts to change their life.

Related to the system, the society has created a regulation which limits the development of education for the low caste community. Many people from this community only acquire low education. Mayell (2003) states that nearly 90 percent of all poor Indians who come from the low caste are illiterate. The fact shows that there are a large number of low caste people do not have a basic skill for acquiring education. However, there are some people from lower caste who are aware to have education. They believe that their future is in their hand. They try hard to find any possibilities to get the education. One of them is Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar from the low caste community. He was an Indian jurist, political leader, Buddhist activist, philosopher, thinker, anthropologist, historian, orator, prolific writer, economist, scholar, editor, revolutionary and the revivalist of Buddhism in India (Wikipedia;2009). Waghmare (2007) adds that Dr. Ambedkar is one of the most famous Indians of the last century who came from the low caste and being a father of the Indian Constitution and one of the greatest Indian intellectuals and political agitators. This figure shows that everyone can be educated and the caste can not determinate someone capability to acquire education.

Moreover, the occupation for everyone is also believed to be depended on the caste system but more people in this country are not following it continuously until today. According to Ghurye's documents in Driver (1962), certain low caste community had work in many different fields. It means that more people from low caste had disobeyed the regulation that was believed in the society. Chaudhury (2007) also says that less than one-third of workers in this period followed their traditional caste occupations. Both of these documents describe an upward changing related to the occupational structure of the system. It can be considered that low caste society has been aware that they should not follow the system in choosing job or occupation.

This changing has also affected their life economically. In reality, caste has not been an indicator of someone's financial anymore. Everyone can reach a success with their own skill and ability. Chaudhury (2007) finds that in some regions, such as Mysore (Karnataka), Madras (Tamil Nadu) and Uttar Pradesh, some lower castes occupy higher economic positions than high castes. It is proven here that caste does not have any role to limit someone improving their life economically. In addition, Cose (2009) met a figure, named Martin, from low caste who can lead an organization called Navsarjan. Today, it becomes a major force for change toward the discrimination faced by low caste and working in some 3,000 villages across Gujarat. These data emphasize that everyone can build an achievement on economy and leadership through their efforts.

The phenomenon of how the caste is proved as the social construction is often discussed by sociologist. The rigid structure of this system has raised the

problem on the equality of human rights. Therefore, many studies had been conducted in order to evaluate it. *The White Tiger* (2008) written by Aravind Adiga is one of literary works which also exposes the case. Through the main character effort to build his life, this novel show that this system is social construction.

1.1.1 The Caste System in India

The caste system is a system that regulates society in India to live into some classes of social stratification. These classes are divided for specific function in the structure of Indian society. According to Walsh (2007), the classification of people in the system is follow;

“ The highest caste was that of the Brahmins, who were the only ones permitted to read the Vedas (from which they drew their power) and their role was to spread knowledge and teaching throughout the world. The second caste was the Ksatriya, who were the warrior-nobles of society. It was Ksatriyas who dominated positions in government and temporal society and their power was superior to all but the religious Brahmins. Below them were the Vaisyas, who were a form of bourgeoisie, including traders, shopkeepers, artisans and skilled workers of various kinds. The final caste was Sudras, who were servile class whose task was to serve and support the other three castes”

From the quotation, it is seen that the caste system divides the society into three general classes; Brahmins, Vaisyas and Sudras. Each of caste has its specific function, right and duty. The society has to follow this specification. The movement is only happened within each of the caste. According to Vaid (2007), people also believed that if one disobeys the rule, it is impossible for them to have a reincarnation to the higher caste. They follow the rule from generation to

generation. As the result, these people live in separated border which limits the movement of each caste especially the low ones.

In the documents of history, the word caste was first used by 16th century Portuguese traders. It is derived from the Portuguese word *casta*. Bhawan in Murwanto (2006) adds that the term was introduced to India during the British Colonization in 1974 in order to divide Indian society into some groups which was functional for laboring and economic fields.

Moreover, this regulation has also affected many fields in society's life. Low caste community seems to live in a pseudo reservations because of the discrimination applied based on the regulation. The community lives together in a district where all the people come from the same caste. Most of them can not acquire high education and find better job. It is also caused by the influence of the system in the government of this country. According to Jaya (2000), the Constitution of India had provided for the idea of Protective Discrimination, or Affirmative action for the sections of society that were traditionally faced with discrimination. The aim of this rule is to evaluate the discrimination practiced based on the application of the caste system. According to this policy, the government divides the low caste society into some categories; *Scheduled Caste (SC)*, *Schedule Tribes (ST)* and *Other Backward Classes (OBC)* or *Backward Classes*. Each category is determined from their capability and origin district where they were used to live before. It is only 50 % of these people who are able to fill the job's quota that is provided by the government. However, this rule still empowers the stratification tightly because low caste community can only occupy

lower job. It is also caused that the community does not have good skill which is related to the historical discrimination faced by the community in the past. The regulation still does not let this community to develop their live since they are listed into categories that limit their movement.

Nevertheless, there are many changes happened today in the practice of this system. Though this system has been applied in many aspects of society's life, more societies who live in the city do not follow the rule in specific regulation anymore. Birodkar (1998) proposes that in the function on the social relation, it is doubt to say that the caste system exists today but what exist are the feelings of belonging to a certain caste. Thus, they still believed their life and destiny is determined by the caste. The sense of belonging itself is mostly owned by the society who lives in the urban or rural area. Consequently, there are only few people who follow the system.

1.1.2 The Caste as A Social Construction

Social construction (social construct) is a concept or practice that is the creation of a particular group. Particular group refers to a society that regulates certain rule to be applied in their neighborhood. Boghossian (2001) argues that to say of something that it is socially constructed is to emphasize its dependence on contingent aspects of our social selves. This construction tends to be produced by human beings in its society rather than laws resulting from the nature. Therefore, social construction is how society creates some laws based on their consideration where natural is less to be concerned.

The caste system itself is applied through a regulation of Hinduism people. Caste in Encarta Encyclopedia (2009) is defined as a social class with four main hereditary classes into which Hindu society is divided, dictating the social position and the status of people. Yet, the practice of this system has also been followed by other religions in India because this system has emerged in cultural life of the whole people in India.

In addition, according to Beteille in Vaid (2007), a caste is 'a small and named group of persons characterized by endogamy, hereditary membership and a specific style of life which sometimes includes the pursuit by tradition of a particular occupation.' Thus, the definition of the word caste related to a rigid social system in which a social stratification or hierarchy is maintained through heredity and allows only a little mobility among every caste. The low caste is the community who is listed in the bottom of the stratification that suffered from the discrimination of the system. However, they believe that the system can be changed through some efforts.

In this analysis, the terms deal with how low caste community is aware that the system is not a faith or destiny. The rule is not produced from the nature. Since the system is socially constructed, everyone can build their life with their own plan, ability and skill. It is not a rigid structure that can not be changed or repaired.

1.1.3. The White Tiger

Aravind Adiga's novel "The White Tiger" (2008) reflects how caste is a social construction. The caste is a system in India which is believed as a faith. This system influences people in facing many aspects especially on choosing the way of life. The narrator as well as the protagonist, Balram Halwai, represents the person who moves his life out of the construction of the system. He provides his life to higher caste through education, choice of occupation, and leadership.

The communities of the higher caste control the lower caste so that they can not follow the education to the higher level. It is also supported by the belief of the lower caste society that education is useless for them due to the construction of the system. However, the protagonist consider the education as a useful aspect he should acquire to improve his life. He tries to have the basic ability, such as reading and writing, which was not mastered by many people from his caste.

Job and occupation are also constructed by the system. The low caste society tends to work on the occupation which is believed to be appropriate with their caste. Thus, the community chose their job as the sweet maker or any thing which is connected to cooking. Yet, the protagonist chooses different job. He also enlarges his ability by working outside the place and area he lived.

The low caste society almost does not have any chance to build leadership based on the system. In contrast, the protagonist achieves the goal to lead a business by his owned regulation. He also has some employees from the higher caste. His success proves that people from low caste can gain the leadership.

1.1.4 The Brief of Aravind Adiga

Aravind Adiga is one of young writers from India who spend much his time to live outside of his origin country. He was born in Chennai, India on 23rd October 1974 and grew up in Mangalore. He studied at Canara High School and completed his SSLC at St. Aloysius High School in 1990. He continued his education in Australia when he had to follow his family immigrate to this country. He also studied English Literature at Columbia College, Columbia University in New York.

After finishing his education, he began to build his career by joining journalism. He work as a financial journalist and produced many articles at the “Financial Times”, “Money” and “Wall Street Journal”. He was also lucky to be hired by “TIME” as correspondent. Then, he started to work freelance and try to write fiction. He wrote “The White Tiger” as a process of transition for him. However, his background of business journalist contributed a significant input for his fiction writing. In an interview he answered:

“I spend a lot of my time loitering about train stations, or bus stands, or servants’ quarters and slums, and listen and talk to the people around me. There’s a kind of continuous murmur or growl beneath middle – class life in India, and this noise never gets recorded.”

This statement shows that he has done some observations about the condition that has growth up in his country before he transferred it through his writing. He also tends to give a real description about his nationality country which is seldom to be raised up in public. As his first literary work, *The White Tiger* won the 2008 Booker Prize. He is also the first former “TIME” correspondent to win this Prize.

This novel became one of novels with different theme comparing to the romantic idealism of Indian stories in last decades. It studies about the contrast between India's rise as a modern global economy and the lead character as someone who comes from crushing rural poverty. Prasannarajan (2008) says:

“The White Tiger is a novel born in that infinitesimal moment of darkness. And as a debut, it mark the arrival of a story teller who strikes a fine balance between the sociology of the wretched place he has chosen as home and the twisted humanism of outcast.”

It shows that this novel get the attachment of the reader through the different sight of story's theme.

Then, he continued his writing thought publishing some short stories. They are “The Sultan's Battery”, “Smack”, and “The Elephant”. “The Elephant” is one of his stories which continue his exploration of the cycle of poverty the caste system of India perpetuates.

1.2 Problem of the Study

There are some cases exposed in Aravind Adiga's novel *The White Tiger* (2008). Yet, caste system appeared to be the most exciting problem to be examined. Caste is believed as a faith but many changes are happened that show it is just a social construction. Thus, the research questions to show that the system is simply social constructed listed below;

1. How far does the Aravind Adiga's novel *The White Tiger* disclose that the caste system in India as a social construction?

2. To what extent do the fictional devices; character, plot (conflict) and setting contribute in revealing the caste as a social construction?

1.3 Purpose of Study

This analysis is intended to disclose how far Aravind Adiga's novel *The White Tiger* shows how caste is merely as a social construction. This is also going to find out to what extent fictional devices, which are characters, plot (conflict) and setting give contribution in revealing the caste as a social construction in the novel.

1.4 Previous Study

The analysis about *The White Tiger* (2008) novel has not been found yet. However, there are two analyses which are disclosed to this study. The first study is written by Esti Pakaryaningsih entitled *Velutha's Reason and Efforts to Break the Caste System in Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things*. This study also analyze about the caste system that affect the character's life as one from the low caste and his willingness to break the system. The study is analyzed through Marxism, the concept of the caste system itself and the psychological theory namely hierarchical of need. Marxism theory is used to analyze the social stratification which also impacts the working area that the low one became laborers. The concept of caste system is used to see the character's problem as the low caste member who was aware that he needed to be treated equal with others. The theory of hierarchical need used in describing the character's courage and reasons to break the caste system. The combination of these theories shows the

relationship among members of different caste. Since the low caste community tends to face the discrimination, most of them had been aware that they should be moved out from the system. The main character evaluated in this analysis appeared to be someone with many skills and ability that help him in doing his efforts to break the system. Yet, he finally failed to maintain the efforts. This analysis is concluded with the description about the caste system as a rigid structure. It is also suggested that the system is need to be evaluated more since many discrimination applied contradictory to the equality of human rights.

The second study is written by Rabia Malik entitled *Nastaran Ahsan's novel – Lift: Naming Process and A Call For Socio Political Reform*. This is a study about a novel which also has a setting of the condition nowadays in India. It focuses on the character to take a snap shot of the current environment of India. The backdrop of the novel influenced much from the caste system and discrimination followed especially for the low caste ones. This study analyzes the condition through a concept of prejudice and hostility to the Schedule Caste (Positive Discrimination Policy for low caste community). The prejudice often faced by the low caste community which also affects their development to a better life. However, the major characters struggled from the situation. This analysis also sees that those characters who came from the different level of caste achieved the same goal. The lower one has even easier steps to reach the goal. Malik saw that Nastaran employs strong use literary devices of characterization to explore the socio political condition in India today. He also argues that this novel is aimed to catch the reader's attention on that case.

These two studies give much contribution on this analysis. Both of these studies are the analysis about the novels from Indian writers that also expose the society's life within the caste system practice. However, this analysis explores the system as a social construction which is flexible to the people's movement. It is focused on how the character from the low caste leaved out the system and proves it as a construction that can be changed through ability and skill.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The analysis of this novel employs the concept of social constructionism. It is primarily proposed by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann in their book *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966). It is a concept that considers how social phenomena develop in social contexts. They argue that all knowledge, including the most basic, taken-for-granted common sense knowledge of everyday reality, is derived from and maintained by social interactions. In this case, the reality is related to how the people recognize the regulation stated where they are living in as reality or nature law existed without any exception. According to Marshall (1998), social constructionism is a general term used to theories that emphasize the socially created nature of social life. Social life contents the human beings who act those interactions. This statement supports the idea of Berger and Luckmann that social interactions hold the important role on building the realities received in the society.

In addition, social constructionism is derived from the study of social construction which is interrelated to cultural values. Hacking in Bogghosian

(2001) states that social construction is often applied not only to socially items – things and facts – but to our beliefs about them. Thus, the belief has growth and interconnected to the cultural life. Altusser in Barker (2005) proposes that social construction is not totally that make culture as an expression, but as a complex structure of politics, economic and ideology aspects that is dominant structurally. In short, social construction strongly influences many aspects in the society life.

Social stratification is one of socially constructed law which is also produced from cultural life. This construction is necessary to keep a society functioning at its desired level of proficiency. Consequently, it emerges tightly in the social life. The caste system is one of these cultural practices. Karl Mark (in Wikibook, 2009) sees social stratification is similar to this system. He adds that the status of each caste is a social construct which already pre-determined before one is born. In the system, the low ones tend to accept discrimination in most of aspects of life. This condition has built a consideration among few of low caste people to see the system as a social construction.

Therefore, this analysis is also related with the concept of Self-Reliance by Ralph Waldo Emerson. Self Reliance is a concept about trusting the genuine of self. Emerson's idea is about how someone must act something by themselves whenever they want to a change happened in their life, rather than imitating what has existed around. It is how someone has the ability to and courage to listen to themselves rather than letting other people, things or events decide what they should be, do or have. The important content of this concept which relates to this

study is about how everyone create his or her awareness that they have right to determine their own destiny and future.

The awareness will lead someone to think and create any efforts to prove the existence. Pine (2010) says that Self-Reliance should be a starting point for someone to think about themselves and be self-confident in own abilities to always make it on their own. Thus, everyone can live through their own decision without any control that can limit someone to improve his or her life. Moreover, this belief will give an encouragement for everyone to build power and ability to do any kinds of effort that can support them to reach the opportunities.

Since this cultural phenomenon is one of the social constructions, it is remarked as the changeable law. The regulation of the system is the production of the society that is obviously can follow the movement of the society within. Related to this analysis, the character, Balram Halwai in this novel who is from the low caste, was aware of this situation. In considering the system as a social construction, he tried to evaluate the discrimination on the system to the low caste is contradictory to the equality of human rights. He also builds his ability and skill to make his own life out of the system.

The analysis of this novel is supported by context-based interpretation. According to Tillard in Selden (1993), context based interpretation sees that there is an interconnection between the text and what outside of it, such as history, social and cultural phenomenon. This analysis is connected to social and cultural condition in the Indian society who practices the hierarchical system. Thus, the

context used in this analysis is the social phenomenon within the application of the caste system in the society.

In analyzing this novel, fictional devices such as character, conflict and setting are crucial to be examined. Characters are the heart and soul of a piece of fiction. Corner (2009) says that through characters problems arise, a plot is developed, relationships are formed and conversations take place. Hence, characters are one of elements of fiction that has an important role in the story. Through exploring a character, it can be evaluated how the messages on a story delivered to the reader. The character in this novel is Balram who has and uses his awareness and willing to move out from the social construction.

The next device to be analysed is the plot which is focused on the conflict. it happens between the character and the condition in his surrounding where the social construction happened. According to Robert (1999), conflict may also be abstract, such as when the character opposes natural objects, modes of behavior or public opinion. It is related here where the character of the novel oppose how the society's opinion and ideas toward the social construction which had built in their neighborhood.

The last one is setting. Setting helps much in exploring the topic in this study because it is a point where a social construction taken place. In Encarta encyclopedia (2009) setting is defined as the physical and social context in which the action of a story occurs. Furthermore, Madden (2002) argues that setting has an impact on character and conflict. In this analysis, the social context refers to the

caste system. The system has appeared discrimination for the character but it has built his awareness that the system is a social construction.

1.6 Methodology

The analysis of this novel is done through context-based interpretation that considers the connection between elements within and outside of the text. The element outside the text is the social and cultural condition. Moreover, it is also done by analyzing fictional devices; character, plot (conflict) and setting. In analyzing the character, it will be done by exploring its belief, thought and efforts done to prove a system as a social construction. The focused on conflict will be helped much on evaluating how the character oppose his social condition. The last one is the setting as an important role that related to the social construction. Moreover, these elements are analyzed based on social constructionism theory proposed by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann and related to the concept of Self-Reliance by Ralph Waldo Emerson.

CHAPTER II

THE CASTE AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

This chapter discusses about *The Caste as A Social Construction* in Aravind Adiga novel entitled *The White Tiger* (2008). The analysis of the novel is done through exploring the character, plot (conflict), and setting. The character is the protagonist represents a person who changed his life regardless the caste constructed for him. Though the character came from the low caste community, he achieved some goals to approve that caste can not determine everyone's life. it can be seen through by having education, choosing occupation differently from what has been lined by his caste and owning leadership.

2.1. Having Education.

The caste system has intimidated the lower caste community to consider that education is not important for them. The society believes that the duty of the lowers is only for serving the higher. They also regard this community will not be able to acquire the education since the lowers live in poverty. It is believed that they will not be capable to be educated. Therefore, most of them became illiterate.

The protagonist was also one who came from the low caste. His name is Balram Halwai. Halwai is his specific caste which means Sweet-Maker. Therefore, it was believed to be a sweet-maker was his destiny. It means that he did not need any knowledge or form of education instead of learning how to be a good sweet-maker. He was also regarded not to be able to master the education.

However, the protagonist's father appears to be someone in the community who believe that education is important. Everyone has a right to own the education. It shows that there is someone within the community had awareness to move out from the submissiveness of the system. It can be seen from the quotation below;

“Rickshaw – puller he may have been – a human beast of burden – but my father was a man with a plan.
I was his plan.
One day he lost his temper at home and began yelling at the women. This was the day they told him that I had not been going to class. He did something he had never dared do before – he yelled at Kusum:
How many times have I told you: Munna *must* read and write!”
(p:15)

The father in this quotation believed that education is the only key for them to improve their life. It is not the caste that can determine any decision in their life but they are themselves. Therefore, his son should get the education. It was a must to be acquired by his son. He did a resistance toward those beliefs that education is not their necessity. He was keeping force his son to be literate. It means that the father of character did not accept the rule of their caste which does not supports them to be educated. The sentence *I was his plan* shows that the figure believe in a movement. They could move out from the poverty. He was aware on their own power to change their life.

This understanding has pushed the protagonist to fight any obstacles in the process of acquiring the education. It is shown from this following quotation;

“Two or three days passed. I was in my classroom, sitting at black slate and chalk that my father had brought me from one of his trips to Dhanbad, working on the alphabet on my own. The boys were chatting or fighting. The teacher had passed out.” (p:21)

The text above shows that the class had lack of facilities, rules and lost the most important element for studying, the teacher. The setting in the text refers to the chaos atmosphere in the room where the students were busy to do other activities instead of learning the lesson. The problems appeared to be the obstacles for the protagonist. It was a conflict for him to face the obstacles. However, he was not influenced by all of the disturbing things. He was capable to learn the lesson by himself while others were not. He could solve the problem and kept concentrating to the lesson.

Everyone in his surroundings started to see that the protagonist was different from others. It can be revealed from the quotation below;

“The inspector wrote for sentences on the board and pointed his cane to a boy.
“Read”
One boy after the other stood up and blinked at the wall.
“Try Balram, sir” the teacher said. “He’s the smartest of the lot. He reads well” (p:19)

It is shown that the recognition was started from the small space of neighborhood, which was the school. It can be seen that everyone admitted that he had good ability in understanding the lessons. Most of the students did not have good capability in reading but he did it well. He was coming to the top and be the best. It is proven here that he could go out from the construction. Being the best student in the class had lost his inferiority in his neighborhood.

Moreover, the protagonist’s relative approved the recognition. He was appeared to be someone different. He was able to read well while the society constructed that he would not. It can be seen from the quotation follow;

“Smiling affectionately at me, the Mongoose said,
“We’ve already told your family about it. Your granny,
what’s her name?”
“ ... “
“I didn’t hear that.”
“ ...m “
“Yes, that’s it. Kusum. I drove to Laxmangarh – it’s a
bad road, isn’t? – and he explained everything to her
personality. She’s quite a woman.” He rubbed his
forearms and made a big grin, so I knew he was telling
the truth.
“She says she’s proud of you doing this. She’s agreed to
be a witness to the confession as well. That’s her
thumbprint on the page, Balram. Just below the spot
where you’re going to sign.”
“If he’s illiterate, he can press his thumb,” the man in the
black coat said. “Like this.” He pressed his thumb
against the air.
“He’s literate. His grandmother told me he was the first
in the family to read and write. She said you always were
a smart boy Balram.” (p:99)

The text above shows that he was not included within the construction that people used to believe on the system. Though the society had judged all the lowers owned the same condition of being illiterate, he succeeded to oppose the assumption. The utterances ... *he was the first in the family to read and write* ... emphasizes that he had prove to everyone that he can be educated though his surrounding was not. It also shows that he was the first one in his surrounding who had done a changing in education. It proves that everyone can be educated regardless their caste has chance or ability.

His belief on education and awareness had made him to be able to choose a decision in his life. He kept on learning anything that can support his knowledge though he finished studying lessons in school. It also emphasizes that he was different from other people in his community. It can be reflected from this quotation;

“Instead of wiping out the spots from tables and crushing coals for the oven, I used my time at teashop in Laxmangarh to spy on every customer at every table, and overhear everything they said. I decided that this was how I would keep my education going forward – that’s the one good thing I’ll say for my self. I’ve always been a big believer in education – especially my own.” (p:29)

The setting in the text above refers to the crowded atmosphere where the protagonist was working. However, he was not influenced by the noise condition. He could still concentrate on listening everything that useful to increase his education. It describes his strong motivation to have knowledge as much as possible in order to be educated. The sentence *I decided that this was how I would keep my education going forward* – shows that he can choose which one was the most important for him to do. He was aware that knowledge in education could be achieved in anytime, anywhere. He realized that it was not only a formal school to help him to be educated. He was not intimidated by the belief of the social construction. He believed that the key was in him. The sentence *I’ve always a big believer in education – especially my own* reflects that he believed on his own ability and intelligence which can make his life better. He decided not to follow the people on his neighborhood but stood up with his own decision to move up his life.

In short, the protagonist has proved to his society that lower caste can acquire education. He was not intimidated by his surrounding to enrich his knowledge. The setting which refers to chaos and crowded atmosphere has produced some obstacles for the protagonist. The conditions do not support him to learn the ability well and do not give him much space to master it. However, those problems do not influence the protagonist’s evaluation and motivation. The

confession from the teacher and his relative also support him in the evaluation of the system. It can not force the protagonist's life to be constructed. It is proven from the contradiction happened between the society's belief and the protagonist's achievement. The case has established the truth that caste is only a social construction. The social interaction has built the caste system to be a belief of these people's faith. However, the self reliance that has grown in the protagonist succeeds him to change the construction.

2.2. Choosing Different Occupation

It has been constructed in the community that everyone has to choose any occupation or job appropriate to their caste. Each caste has its own specific occupation. The society believes that the tradition has to be obeyed in order to survive their life for long period. They can not choose different job since everyone has their own capability based on their caste. Thus, most of them were constructed in their choice of occupation.

Lower caste tends to belief they would not get any better job since it was written in the system. Therefore, they had only low motivation on trying some efforts to change or mobilize their life. It can be seen from the quotation below;

“Things are different in the Darkness. There every morning, tens of thousands of young men s it in the tea shops, reading the newspaper, or lie on a charpoy humming a tune, or sit in their rooms talking to a photo of a film actress. They have no job today. They know they won't get any job today. They've given up the fight.” (p:30)

The word *Darkness* refers to the environment or neighborhood where the lowers lived. The setting here refers to the cultural condition where the lower used to

evaluate their faith as the unchangeable rule. It can be seen from the sentences *They know they won't get any job today* and *They've given up the fight* which show that they accepted the regulation because they believed it as their destiny. Their thought had been constructed to consider that they might not get better life in the future. They did many activities which show that they did not do any effort to move up their life. They also had lost their strength to fight any efforts. Thus, they would not have any power to change it. They did not do any resistance to fight it. It is the reason why their life was always left behind.

Everyone had underestimated to the protagonist's skill. He was regarded to have good skill only on doing job which was appropriate to his caste. It can be revealed from the following quotation;

“Halwai”
“Sweet-makers,” the old driver said, shaking his head.
“That's what you people do. You make sweet. How can you learn to drive?” He pointed his bookah at the live coals. “That's like getting coals to make ice for you. Mastering a car? – he moved the stick of an invisible gearbox – “ it's like taming a wild stallion – only a boy from the warrior castes can manage that. You need to have aggression in your blood. Muslims, Rajputs, Sikha – they're fighters, they can become drivers. You think sweet-makers can last long in fourth gear?”(p:31)

The setting in the quotation above refers to the social assumptions about the occupation that everyone must be mastered. The social interaction believed that the protagonist was destined to be a sweet maker. His skill had been determined on the system and he was forced to accept it. Some castes had been arranged for good skill on driving but it was socially impossible for the protagonist. The sentence *That's like getting coals to make ice for you* means that it had extraordinary difficulties for one caste to master other caste's capability. It was

opposing the faith for someone to change it. The sentence "*You think sweet-makers can last long in fourth gear?*" emphasizes that the society concerned the belief strongly.

On the contrary, the character saw the assumptions were not reliable. He evaluated the different truth which had happened on his father's and his own life.

It is reflected on this quotation;

"Let's start with me.

See: Halwai, my name, means "sweet-maker"

That's my caste – my destiny. Everyone in the Darkness who hears that name knows all about me at once. That's why Kishan and I kept getting jobs at sweetshops wherever we went. The owner thought, *Ah they've Halwais, making sweets and tea is in their blood.*

But if we were Halwais, then why was my father not making sweets but pulling a rickshaw? Why did I grow up breaking coals and wiping tables, instead of eating *gulah jamuns* and paties when and where I close to? Why was I lean and dark and cunning, and not fat and creamy – skinned and smiling, like a boy raised on sweets would be?" (p: 35-36)

The text above describes that their life was different to the occupational concept of the caste system. He realized that his father did not follow the tradition. He found that there was no any connection between the caste and what they were doing to earn their living. The sentence "*But if we were Halwais, then why was my father not making sweets but pulling a rickshaw?*" shows his thinking that they can move on their life though they oppose the rule. This fact had challenged him to be aware that the system was not absolutely true. It means he could own any abilities or skill he wanted to master and choose many kinds of occupation. It supports that it was not a faith but a construction produced by human being.

The protagonist can prove to others that he could own the skill which was not appropriate to his caste. He even got a confession about his good ability. It can be seen from the quotation below;

“Listen,” the old driver said when I was handing him over the hundred rupees he had been promised as bonus. “It’s not enough to drive. You’ve got to become a *driver*. You’ve got to get the right attitude, understand? Anyone tries to overtake you on the road, do this” – he clenched his fist and shook it – “and call him a sister-fucker a few times. The road is a jungle, get it? A good driver must roar to get ahead on it.”
He patted me on the back. “You’re better than I thought – you *are* a surprise package a little fellow. I’ve got a reward for you.” (p:32)

In fact, the regulation can be changed. Any skill can be trained and mastered by everyone. It did not depend on the caste but the strong motivation and effort that someone could try. The text also shows that the character had willingness to learn new skill. The sentence *You’ve got to become a driver* means that the character can transform himself to be someone with different skill of caste. It shows that he can choose to be anything and succeed to do it whenever he was trying to master it. The man who liked to teach him how to drive emphasizes that many people were getting to believe they can live their own life. The utterances “*You’ve better than I thought – you are a surprise package a little fellow*” shows that he was able to own a different skill and became a different one from his community. He succeeded to do something which was thought impossible to be done. He strengthens that the system is social construction by doing an effort to change what has been believed within the construction.

The recognition was also accepted by character when he was enlarging the area on looking for his job. He can be in the same position with the people from higher castes. It was revealed from this following quotation;

“They made me drive them around for half an hour, and then told me to head back
“Not bad,” the old man said as he got out of the car.
“Fellow is cautious and good. What’s your last name again?”
“Halwai”
“Halwai. . .” He turned to the small dark man. “What caste is that, top or bottom?”
And I knew that my future depended on the answer to this question.
“ . . . “
“Are you from a top or bottom caste, boy?”
I didn’t know what he wanted me to say, so I flipped both answer – I could probably have made a good caste either way – and then said, “Bottom, sir.”
Turning to Mukesh Sir, the old man said, “All our employees are top caste. It won’t hurt to have one or two bottom castes working for us” (p: 35-36)

The quotation shows that more people admitted his ability of driving. He had good capability on the skill and others realized it too. He could ensure people to believe that he can do other caste’s job very well. Indirectly, he had helped people to see that the construction can not determine everyone to have each skill of their caste. In this quotation, the setting refers to the historical condition. It was a tradition to place every one to work on the occupation which was appropriate to the caste. The sentences “*All our employees are top caste. It won’t hurt to have one or two bottom castes working for us*” proves that there were no one from the same caste as the character had achieved the position to be a driver. He also guided people to admit his position to be placed on higher caste because he succeeded to reach the goal by choosing and mastering the skill of driving.

The society found a contradiction in the protagonist. It can be seen from this quotation;

“She laughed and laughed when she saw me in my costume, bowing low to her with the cardboard box. I served them, and then, as Mr. Ashok had instructed, stood near the portrait of Cuddles and Puddles with folded hands and wanted.

“Ashok,” she said. “Now hear this, Balram, what is it we’re eating?” I knew it was a trap, but what could I do? – I answered. The two of them burst into giggles.

“Say it again, Balram.” They laughed again.

“It’s not piJJA. It’s piZZA. Say it properly.”

“Wait – you’re mispronouncing it too. There’s a *T* in the middle.

Peet. Zah.”

Don’t correct my English, Ashok. There’s not a *T* in pizza. Look at the box”

“He cuts the pizza so badly. I just don’t understand how he can come from a caste of cooks.” (p: 88-89)

The text above shows that he did not have skill appropriate to the system. People found different truth with the protagonist. People in his caste community were regarded to be skillful on doing any work which was related to cooking. However, the protagonist did not have the capability. The sentence “*He cuts the pizza so badly. I just don’t understand how he can come from a caste of cooks.*” shows that he was obviously can not do the job which was regarded appropriate to his caste. People finally noticed that the correlation between the caste and occupation was not relevant. It means that his ability was not destined by the caste but himself. His skill was not cooking but driving. It was not a guarantee for someone to master a skill based on what had decided in the social structure.

In brief, the protagonist has broken the tradition on occupational structure. He shows that the society beliefs about the structure are not reliable. The setting which refers to social assumptions, cultural and historical conditions guide

everyone to choose the job based on the caste. However, the protagonist proves to his surrounding that there is not any relation between the caste and job skill. It is not true that any ability which is destined by the system would be appropriate to the person. The character proved that he can own an occupation that was regarded for other caste. His awareness had also helped him to move his position getting higher. It is proven from his achievement that the caste is not a faith but social construction.

2.3. Owning Leadership

Culturally, it is impossible for lower caste to lead a business and became a successful entrepreneur. They were uneducated. They also had not ever got any training of being an entrepreneur. Thus, they did not have any idea to raise their finance becoming a business though they had earned some money. What they understood was how to manage the money to survive their life instead of building a business of their own. Therefore, they were trapped in the position as servants. They would not ever become a leader.

Their position as the servant had stopped their dream to live better for the future. It can be revealed from the quotation below;

“We read like that in total silence. After the third murder story, I went to the side, to a clump of trees, to take an ammonia break. He walked along with me. our piss hit the bark of the tree just inches apart.

“I’ve got a question for you?”

“About city girls again?”

“No. About what happen to old drivers?”

“Huh?”

“I mean what will happen to me few years from now. Do I make enough money to buy a house and then set up a business of my own?”

“Well,” he said, “a driver is good till he’s fifty or fifty-five. Then the eyes go bad and they kick you out, right? That’s thirty years from now, Country Mouse. If you save from today, you’ll make enough to buy a small home in slum. If you’ve been a bit smarter and made a little extra on the side, then you’ll have enough to put your son in a good school. He can learn English, he can go to university. The best-case scenario. A house in slum, a kid in college.”

“*Best-case?*”

“Well, on the other hand, you can get typhoid from bad water. Boss sacks you for no reason. You get into an accident – plenty of worst-case scenarios.” (p: 117)

It can be seen that the lower caste accepted the condition in their life as a faith. They did not believe on a changing. Their thought had been intimidated by the caste system so that they would never move from their position. They were living within the border of the system. The comparison between the utterances *The best-case scenario* and *plenty of worst scenarios* describes their submission to consider about better life they might have. They even had given up not only for the effort to fight but also the dreams to imagine.

On the contrary, the skill of entrepreneurship had risen in the protagonist. He was able to decide what kind of business that he would manage. He chose it by his own consideration. It can be seen from the quotation below;

“The next day I took an autorickshaw up to Electronic City. I found a banyan tree by the side of a road, and sat down under it. I sat and watched the buildings until it was evening and I saw all the SUVs racing in; then I watched until two in the morning, when the SUVs began racing out of the buildings.

And I thought, *That’s it. That’s how I fit in.*

Let me explain, Your Excellency. See, men and women in Bangalore live like the animals in forest do. Sleep in the day and work all night, until two, three, four, five o’clock, depending because their masters are on the other side of the world, in America. Big question: how will the boys and girls – girls especially – get from home to the workplace in late evening and then get back home at three in the morning? There is no night bus system in Bangalore, no train system like in Mumbai. The girls would not be safe on buses or

trains anyway. The men of this city, frankly speaking, are animals.
That's where entrepreneurs come in." (p: 179)

The protagonist's evaluation about his surrounding in the text was to understand what kind of business which can grow on the city. The utterance *That's where entrepreneurs come in* shows his idea on looking toward the condition. It means that he had a good sense of business. Though he was regarded not to have any sense to lead his own life instead of accepting the faith which was lined by the caste system, he could see an opportunity that he might use to earn much profit. The sentence *There is no night bus system in Bangalore, no train system like in Mumbai* shows that the city had lack of facilities which enlarged the space for crime actions. On the contrary, he noticed the situation as luckiness for him. It was a great evaluation for someone from the lower caste since he had not ever finished his school. He did not think only in the border of the construction. His thought also shows that he could make his own decision to select what is the life he might have in the future.

In addition, his intuition on leading a business was getting sharper. It is reflected from the following quotation;

"I love my start-up – this chandelier, and this silver laptop, and these twenty-six Toyota Qualises – but honestly, I'll get bored of it sooner or later. I'm a *first-gear* man, Mr. Premier. In the end, I'll have to sell this start-up to some other moron – *entrepreneur*, I mean – and head into a new line. I'm thinking of real estate next. You see, I'm always a man who see "tomorrow" when other see "today". The whole world will come to Bangalore tomorrow. Just drive to the airport and count the half built glass-and-steel boxes as you pass them. Look at the names of the American companies that are building them. And when these Americans here, where do you think they're all going to sleep? On the road?" (p: 192)

It seems that the protagonist owned a good sense of entrepreneurship. The utterance “*start-up*” describes that he was able to manage the business and successful to have some luxurious properties. It proves his succeed. Furthermore, the sentence *I’m always a man who see “tomorrow” when other see “today”* means that his thinking was oriented to the future. He realized that his life would not be stopped just on the day he was living but more days to the future. He considered more about many things that he could do in the next days. He was aware that he should explore any chances to be a successful entrepreneur. The quotation above also emphasizes that he was always capable to see the lack to be luckiness. He did not see the case as the disadvantage of living in the city where he stayed but an advantage to help him earn more benefits.

The protagonist’s ability on leading a business can be seen through the act of professionalism to control his employees. It is revealed from the quotation below;

“You’ll see photos of my boys too. All sixteen of them. Once I was driver to a master, but now I am a master of drivers. I don’t treat them like servants – I don’t slap, or bully, or mock anyone. I don’t insult any of them by calling them my “family.” Either. They’re my employees I’m their boss, that’s all’ I make them sign a contract and I sign it too, and both of us must honor that contract. That’s all. If they noticed the way I talk, the way I dress, the way I keep things clean, they’ll go up in life. if they don’t, they’ll be drivers all their lives. I leave the choice up to them. When the work is done I kick them out of the office: no chitchat, no cups of coffee.”
(p: 182)

The quotation describes how the character chose the appropriate attitude between the employer and his employees. He could manage the way he should behave to a family and the way he should lead his workers. He was able to differ between the

importance of his business and privacy professionally. The sentence *I make them sign a contract and I sign it too, and both of us must honor that contract* reflects that he could decide the border and the laws that should be considered in managing the business relationship. It also means that he appreciated the agreement of the relationship. The case emphasizes that he could regulate his business professionally.

Moreover, his professionalism was shown when he held the responsibility for his employees. It can be seen from the following quotation;

“That’s the dead boy’s brother, sir,” he whispered to me. “He’s in a total rage. I haven’t been able to get him out of here.”

I shook Mohammad Asif out of his trance. “Take my car and get these women home, first of all.”

“Let my boy go,” I told the policeman loudly. “He’s got to get the people in there home. Whatever you want to deal with, you deal with me.”

“How can you let him go?” the brother of the dead boy yelled at the policeman.

“Look here, son,” I said, “I am the owner of this vehicle. Your fight is with me, not with this driver. He was following my orders, to drive as fast as he could. The blood is on my hands, not his. These girls need to go home. Come with me to the police station – I offer you myself as your ransom. Let them go.” (p : 184-185)

The text above reflects that he was a good leader for his employees. The setting in this quotation refers to the stressful condition where the protagonist had to be connected with the police officer. However, he could control himself in the situation not to do any activity that might endanger his position. It can be seen from how he did not get panic and could handle the situation. The utterance *”Take my car and get these women home, first of all”* shows his consideration to realize that a good service and pleasing the customer was the most important aspect to be concerned to keep his business run well. It means that he had a good management

in leading his business. He knew that the customers were the main priority. He was aware that any troubles should not influence it and threaten what he had managed so far. The utterances *I am the owner of this vehicle* and *The blood is on my hands* describes that he was brave to take the responsibility for what his employees had done though it might danger his position as the entrepreneur in public . It shows that he recognized the risks he could receive on the kind of business and he had been responsible for each case that might happen. It emphasizes his good skill in understanding how to manage a business well.

His professionalism in the business relationship had raised his position in the society. His good manner to his employees also approved that he was succeed in leading his business. It is reflected from the quotation below;

“I’ve come to respect Muslim, sir. They’re not the brightest lot, except for those four poet fellows, but they make good drivers, and they’re honest people, by and large, although a few of them seem to get this urge to blow trains up every year. I wasn’t going to fire Asif over this.” (p: 187)

He could separate the case between personal judgment and working together on a business. He was not influenced by many factors which mentioned that employees from Muslim might endanger him. He knew that he should see the positive benefits he can accept from the workers instead of the negative images. On the other hand, the quotation also supports his position to be placed on the higher class. Muslims were put on the higher level of caste comparing to the character’s caste. This case shows that his successfulness had made him loose the image of being the servant. It even established his superiority in the society.

Furthermore, his good sense of business and the way he practiced the professionalism had helped him to get higher position. He could own many things

that were judged impossible for him. It can be revealed from the following quotation;

“I was one of the drivers in the early days, but then I gave up. I don’t really think I ever enjoyed driving, you know? Taking is much more fun. Now the start-up has grown into a big business. We’ve got sixteen drivers who work in shifts with twenty-six vehicles. Yes, it’s true: a few hundred thousand rupees of someone else’s money, and a lot of hard work, can make magic happen in this country. Put together my real estate and my bank holdings, and I am worth fifteen times the sum I borrowed from Mr. Ashok. See for yourself at my Web site. See my motto: “We Drive Technology Forward” In *English!* See the photos of my fleet: twenty-six shining new Toyota Qualises, all fully air-conditioned for the summer months, all contracted out to famous technology companies. If you like my SUVs, if you want your call-center boys and girls driven home in style, just click where it says **CONTACT ASHOK SHARMA NOW** Yes, Ashok! That’s what I call myself these days. Ashok Sharma, North Indian entrepreneur, settled in Bangalore. If you were sitting here with me, under this big chandelier, I would show you all the secrets of my business. You could stare at the screen of my silver Macintosh laptop and see photos of my SUVs, my drivers, my garages, my mechanics, and my paid-off policemen. All of them belong to me – Munna, whose destiny was to be a sweet-maker.” (p: 181)

His successfulness in text was gained because of his well management in business. It emphasizes that everyone could increase their wealth as much as they could achieve. The character approved that he could own several expensive items which were regarded only for higher caste. The sentence *All belong to me – Munna, whose destiny to be a sweet-maker* shows that he had succeeded to achieve a goal that his society believed he would not. He had transformed himself by doing some efforts with his own power. The construction of the system could not force him to stay on the faith which was destined for him. He expanded his life to be the successful one.

In summary, the protagonist has approved that he could gain a business and owns a well done of leadership. He used to be a servant but now he owns the servant. He breaks the construction by moving up his position from a servant to be the one who is served by other. The setting which refers to the stressful condition for his business is not influenced his ability to lead his business well. The caste system can not determine someone's future. His successfulness had helped him to move his position into the higher class in society. It is proven from the properties he could own and the employees of the higher caste. The case has supported the evaluation that the caste is not absolutely true but constructed from the society.

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