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The Fractured Self: Psychological Liminality and Schizophrenic Consciousness in Aravind Adiga's Novels

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Aravind Adiga's fiction presents characters entangled in a condition of psychological liminality and schizophrenic awareness, formed by postcolonial conflict, migration, and metropolitan disconnection. Although there has been considerable scholarship around Adiga's work focusing on themes of class war, corruption, and economic inequality, limited consideration has been given to the extreme mental fragmentation and identity disintegration that his protagonists experience. This paper explores how characters like Balram Halwai in *The White Tiger*, Manju in *Selection Day*, and Danny in *Amnesty* experience fractured identities, paranoia, and existential crises as they navigate the contradictions of modern India and global displacement. The analysis is framed through the lens of Homi Bhabha's concept of liminality, Frantz Fanon's postcolonial psychology, Freud's theory of the uncanny, and Deleuze & Guattari's schizophrenic subject under capitalism. Examining narrative strategies, such as unreliable narration, stream of consciousness, and disjointed narrative, this paper claims that Adiga's fiction corresponds to the inward psychological disunities of people between tradition and modernity, belonging and foreignness, and desire and alienation. By combining postcolonial studies with psychological critique, this research paper presents a new insight into Adiga's novels regarding how mental instability, broken selfhood, and

liminal consciousness are at the center of his literary representation of the modern Indian nation and its displaced subjects.

Keywords: Liminality, Fractured self, Schizophrenia, Postcolonial alienation, Psychological identity, Modern India

Introduction

The concept of psychological liminality and schizophrenic consciousness has been the focal critical approach in recent literary scholarship, especially when applied to postcolonial and capitalist economies. Liminality, in Homi Bhabha's (1994) theory, is the "in-between" identity state of being, existing on the edge of cultural, social, or psychological borders. In postcolonial literary theory, liminal subjects grapple with articulating their sense of self as they contend with cross-cutting cultural forces. By contrast, the theory of schizophrenic consciousness developed by Deleuze and Guattari (1983) accentuates the decentering of identity in capitalism, where the individual has a fractured sense of self due to the demands of modernity. This is also augmented by Frantz Fanon's (1961) work on postcolonial alienation, where previously colonized subjects are afflicted with a psyche divided from the historical oppression and ongoing power of imperialist systems. In Aravind Adiga's novels, these theoretical frameworks are realized in the form of protagonists who grapple with existential identity crises, suspended between the old past and the hyper-capitalist, globalized now. While most of the current scholarship on Adiga's fiction has concentrated on economic inequality, class conflict, and corruption (Kumar, 2019; Mishra, 2020), there has been minimal investigation of the psychological fragmentation and existential crises that underpin his stories.

This paper contends that Adiga's fiction is more than just economic commentary and rather challenges the fractured consciousness of India's marginalized subjects, specifically through the prism of mental instability. In *The White Tiger* (2008), Balram Halwai embodies the schizophrenic self, oscillating between servitude and rebellion, morality and amorality, ultimately embracing an altered self to survive in India's ruthless capitalist system. His unreliable narration and stream-of-consciousness monologue reflect a mind

grappling with liminal existence (Sharma, 2021). Similarly, in *Selection Day* (2016), Manju's psychological turmoil stems from the conflict between individual desires and societal expectations, particularly concerning his father's overbearing ambition and his repressed sexuality. His self-perception constantly shifts, mirroring Deleuze and Guattari's "schizoanalysis" of the self as a product of competing forces (1983, p. 15).

Lastly, in *Amnesty* (2020), Danny's existential crisis as an undocumented immigrant in Australia exemplifies postcolonial alienation, wherein displacement fosters both a fractured self and an ethical dilemma regarding survival and integrity (Fanon, 1961, p. 203). Through the intersection of postcolonial studies and psychological analysis, this paper offers a new interpretation of Adiga's novels as tales of psychic breakdown and identity dissolution. It discusses how Adiga uses narrative strategies like fractured storytelling, untrustworthy narration, and internal monologues to represent the psychological instability of his characters. The article also discusses how contemporary India's capitalist, postcolonial, and globalized contexts led to the creation of schizophrenic subjectivities—people torn between their inner selves and outer worlds. Finally, Adiga's fiction reflects India's splintered modern consciousness, where aspiration and alienation, belonging and exile, progress and paralysis exist in an uneasy equilibrium.

Research Gap

Aravind Adiga's novels have been widely studied in the context of economic mobility, corruption, and class struggle, with scholars identifying capitalist exploitation, socio-political repression, and the de-moralization of neoliberal India as recurring themes (Kumar, 2019; Mishra, 2020). The majority of existing work has explored how Adiga's protagonists navigate social liminality, caught between rural and urban realms, servitude and enterprise, and tradition and modernity (Sharma, 2021). Research has particularly been concerned with the economic and political dimensions of liminality, and how structural inequality maps the fate of his protagonists (Gupta, 2022). There is a glaring absence of attention given to the psychological splitting that

his protagonists face. This is a significant omission, for postcolonial theory has keenly engaged with the psychic impact of colonialism and cultural displacement on identity. Ashis Nandy (1983) points out the profound psychological wounds inflicted by colonial rule, resulting in internalized inferiority and divided selves. Elleke Boehmer (1995) adds that postcolonial writing often represents identity as unstable and fluid, resulting from cultural hybridization and displacement. Few studies have discussed the schizophrenic consciousness, shattered identity, and mental disintegration that Adiga's heroes experience because they spent their lives in transitional zones.

While scholars like Homi Bhabha (1994) have theorized cultural liminality and Frantz Fanon (1961) has explored the psychological consequences of colonialism, such theories have rarely been used to discuss Adiga's novels in detail. Also, the concept of the capitalist schizophrenic subject from Deleuze and Guattari (1983) has never been taken up fully to discuss Adiga's protagonists, who appear to be grappling with splintered selves, paranoia, and existential crises. This paper bridges this research gap by combining postcolonial and psychological analyses, explaining how Adiga's protagonists represent fragmented selfhoods reflective of India's navigation through modernity, globalization, and displacement. By analysing the inner turmoil, psychological instability, and narrative strategies employed to depict these states of mind, this paper makes an original contribution to the study of contemporary Indian literature. It shows how Adiga's narratives transcend socio-economic ambiguity to expose the splintered psychological awareness of postcolonial India.

Objectives

- Examine how Adiga's protagonists experience psychological liminality and fractured identity under societal pressures.
- Analyse the impact of class, migration, and postcolonial conditions on their mental states.
- Situate Adiga's representation of mental instability within the broader discourse of postcolonial identity and psychological realism**.**

Theoretical Framework

This study employs postcolonial theory, psychoanalysis, and schizoanalysis to explore psychological liminality and identity fragmentation in the novels of Aravind Adiga. Homi Bhabha's liminality theory, where a fluid and unstable identity is suspended in a middle space (Bhabha, 1994), is the core idea in this research. Bhabha's work on the unhomely also explains the sense of alienation even in known spaces—a phenomenon evidenced in Adiga's protagonists (Bhabha, 1992). Frantz Fanon's postcolonial trauma theory places in the forefront the psychological implications of colonialism, reminding us how subjects internalize inferiority and undergo identity fractures through structural oppression (Fanon, 1961). Fanon's understanding helps explain the mental instability of characters unrooted by historical and social forces. Adiga's novels' psychological instability is also echoed in Louis A. Sass's (1992) study of schizophrenia, both as a clinical disorder and a metaphor for fragmented self in contemporary literature. Sass's study contextualizes Adiga's protagonists' disjointed consciousness as they strive to meet incompatible societal expectations and inner contradictions. This is complemented by Bhabha's (1994) theory of cultural hybridity in placing such fragmentation within the postcolonial condition of existing in liminal 'in-between' spaces. Sigmund Freud's theory of the uncanny is a concept explaining psychological uneasiness as when something becomes strange yet remains familiar (Freud, 1919). Unreliable narration and stream of consciousness in Adiga mirror this inner conflict and repressed tension. Lastly, Deleuze and Guattari's theory of schizophrenic capitalism examines how capitalist systems fragment the self by demanding constant reinvention (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983). Their concept supports reading Adiga's characters as unstable identities shaped by economic survival and global precarity. Together, these theoretical lenses provide a robust framework for analysing Adiga's protagonists as fractured selves navigating postcolonial displacement, capitalist pressures, and internalised alienation.

Discussion

Framing Psychological Liminality through Theory

The fractured self and psychological liminality in Aravind Adiga's novels can be examined through the lenses of postcolonial theory, psychoanalysis, and schizoanalysis. This section explores how key theoretical concepts—Bhabha's liminality and the unhomely, Fanon's postcolonial trauma, Freud's uncanny, and Deleuze & Guattari's schizophrenic capitalism—provide a framework for understanding the mental disintegration of Adiga's protagonists. Homi Bhabha's theory of liminality is the space in between where identity is fluid and unstable (Bhabha, 1994). Liminality is being suspended between two cultural, social, or economic states, which characterizes most of Adiga's characters.

Manifestations of Fragmented Identity in Adiga's Protagonists

In *The White Tiger* (2008), Balram Halwai is suspended between servitude and revolt, rural tradition and urbanity, legality and illegality. His identity is never static; rather, it is always in flux due to external pressures. In the same vein, *Selection Day* (2016) features a liminal hero in Manju, caught between his father's vision and his unspoken wants, between classical masculinity and an ambiguous, more fluid self. Bhabha's theory of liminality describes why Adiga's heroes find it difficult to define themselves because they are caught in a world that denies them stability.

Bhabha further introduces the term unhomely, in which people are alienated even in their own spaces (Bhabha, 1992). One can see this psychological displacement in *Amnesty* (2020), in which Danny is an illegal immigrant in Australia who cannot feel at home either in his country of origin (Sri Lanka) or the country he lives in. His crisis of existence arises due to the breakdown of belonging, and he becomes a quintessential example of Bhabha's postcolonial subject stranded in liminality.

Frantz Fanon's postcolonial theory of psychological trauma is useful for putting Adiga's protagonists' mental suffering into perspective. Fanon (1961) posits that colonialism and structural exploitation leave lasting psychological wounds, producing internalized

inferiority, fractured identity, and violence in resistance. Adiga's work shows protagonists grappling with the aftereffects of colonial and neo-colonial institutions, most notably in their self-conception and understanding of themselves in society. In *The White Tiger*, Balram internalizes the colonial mindset of subordination, holding on to the master-slave relationship until he violently repudiates it. His shift from subordination to violence can be interpreted through Fanon's concept of decolonization as a violent process, wherein the oppressed regain their freedom through destruction (Fanon, 1961). Yet, instead of attaining genuine liberation, Balram is left psychologically broken, tormented by his past and the ethical price of his triumph. Likewise, Manju's self-doubt and repressed longings in *Selection Day* reflect Fanon's analysis of how the postcolonial subject is alienated from their feelings because of societal pressure. His identity crisis is not only individual but also structural, being formed by a world that pushes him into predetermined roles. Through the application of Fanon's work, this research draws attention to how Adiga's characters are marked by the psychological legacy of colonial rule, grappling with an inherited sense of displacement and fragmented identity.

Sigmund Freud's theory of the uncanny (Das Unheimliche) is quite applicable to Adiga's description of paranoia, confusion of identity, and suppressed terror (Freud, 1919). Uncanny is what is familiar and yet strange at the same time, producing ancient fears. This can be observed in Adiga's employment of uncertain narrators, fractured narrative, and psychological instability among his protagonists. Balram in *The White Tiger* is the uncanny self, for he is both a devoted servant and a cold-blooded killer, a subaltern subject and an entrepreneurial self. His narrative veers between self-defense and self-blame, showing his inner turmoil. This duplicity corresponds to Freud's theory that the uncanny appears when the lines of selfhood are blurred (Freud, 1919). Likewise, in *Amnesty*, Danny's immigrant experience is one of a deep uncanny—the language is known, the culture is known, and yet he is an outsider. His presence in Australia is mundane and illegal, prompting an inner tension that saturates his paranoia and anxiety. Freud's theory accounts for the way that Adiga's

characters feel psychological anguish as they move through realms where they both are and are not belonging.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's theory of schizophrenic capitalism argues that capitalist systems fragment identities, creating unstable, commodified selves (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983). They suggest that capitalism encourages individuals to constantly reinvent themselves, producing a state of schizophrenia where identity is never stable. Adiga's fiction demonstrates this theory in characters who are unable to define themselves in the face of economic and social forces. In *The White Tiger*, Balram reinvents himself several times—first as a servant, then as a murderer, then as a businessman—each reinvention accompanied by moral compromise and psychological dislocation. His identity is never complete but always in flux to fit the needs of capitalist survival. In *Selection Day*, Manju's mental distress is linked to his inability to fit into the rigid, commodified world of professional cricket, where athletes are reduced to products. His desire for self-expression clashes with the demands of a hyper-competitive, profit-driven system, mirroring Deleuze and Guattari's argument that capitalism produces alienation and psychic breakdown (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983). Equally, *Amnesty* describes Danny as an uprooted worker trapped within the global economy, perpetually adjusting his identity to make it, yet never settling. His nervousness, suspicion, and existence of fearfulness can be described as manifestations of the schizophrenic subject of capitalism, a being defined by the tensions of displacement, economic vulnerability, and legality.

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, this study demonstrates that Adiga's protagonists experience psychological fragmentation as a result of postcolonial trauma, capitalist alienation, and identity liminality. Bhabha's liminality and the unhomely explain their existential displacement, Fanon's postcolonial trauma contextualizes their mental scars, Freud's uncanny illuminates their paranoia and duality, and Deleuze & Guattari's schizophrenic capitalism reveals the economic pressures that drive their instability. Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008) introduces Balram Halwai as a representation of psychological liminality and schizophrenic

consciousness, trapped between servitude and self-entrepreneurship. His disintegrated self is revealed by schizophrenic duality, unreliable narration, and mental alienation, exhibiting the psychological cost of traversing India's socio-economic divide. Balram's personality is characterized by contradictions, reflecting what Deleuze and Guattari (1983) term "schizophrenic capitalism", in which subjects are in several, frequently contradictory roles to make it in a fast-changing economy. He starts as a devoted servant, well entrenched with the colonial mindset of submissiveness, but ends up as an entrepreneurial killer, defying India's hierarchical systems. Throughout the novel, Balram describes himself as both "half-baked" and a "free man" (Adiga, 2008, p. 10), highlighting his unsteady self-image. His shift from compliant driver to callous entrepreneur is not only an economic change but also a psychological disjuncture, wherein the tension between his subservient past and assertive future remains unbridged. Freud's (1919) "the uncanny" concept illustrates this contradiction—Balram is tormented by his old self, never really shaking off his conditioned inferiority. His relationship with his boss, Ashok, also confirms this divided consciousness. On the one hand, he worships and fears Ashok as a kind of benevolent master, but on the other hand, he is bitter against the exploitative class systems represented by Ashok. This is similar to Fanon's (1961) idea of the "colonial subject's divided self", whereby the subaltern loves and hates the ruling class. By killing Ashok, Balram frees himself from servitude, but his ongoing paranoia and defensive rationalizations indicate a shattered psyche instead of actual freedom. Balram's first-person narration is paramount in realizing his mental instability. His letters to the Chinese Premier are an undiluted psychological monologue revealing his effort towards justifying his crime and reconciling with feelings of guilt and paranoia. The narrative style reflects Bhabha's (1994) "liminal identity," where the narrator is permanently negotiating with himself and his audience. His narration is characterized by exaggerations, contradictions, and rationalizations, further supporting the contention that his account is not to be trusted. For example, he portrays Ashok's killing as a survival act and not an act of moral deficiency:

> "I was a man of free will who had made his own choices… The rest of the world may call it murder, but I call it entrepreneurship" (Adiga, 2008, p. 273).

This effort to redefine murder as economic self-actualization implies a profound psychological break, in which morality is rearranged to accommodate his desires. Deleuze and Guattari (1983) contend that in capitalism, one must "detach from traditional moral structures" in order to thrive, and Balram is the embodiment of this detachment. His paranoia also implies a broken self. Even though he has attained material prosperity, he is always in fear of being caught and punished:

> "At every traffic light, I look at the men around me… I watch for any sign of vengeance" (Adiga, 2008, p. 301).

This continued anxiety belies his argument for freedom, supporting Freud's (1919) contention that the uncanny return of the past is unresolvable guilt and fear. The tension between his assertive tone and subconscious paranoia indicates that his escape from servitude is not complete since he is psychologically bound to the system he broke away from. Balram's quest is likewise an existential state of alienation since he belongs neither to the class of subalterns which he abandoned nor entirely to that world of elitists into whose ranks he penetrates. His alienation replicates the state of being described by Bhabha (1994) as the "unhomely experience", a sense of alienation even from within one's so-called sphere of belongingness. His application of animalistic imagery also serves to highlight his separation from man's moral code. He often calls himself a "white tiger", an uncommon and superior creature, affirming his perception of himself as a predator:

> "In the world of the Rooster Coop, I was a White Tiger—born only once in a generation" (Adiga, 2008, p. 35).

This Darwinian survival perspective, wherein only the survival of the fittest is possible, makes him disconnected from empathy and moral accountability, leading to his schizophrenic mind. Yet his alienation is not just psychological but also socio-economic. Despite gaining wealth, he is still a cultural outcast among Bangalore's elite, affirming that his journey is not an easy class transition but an existential one.

As Fanon (1961) would say, the postcolonial subject tends to grapple with self-definition within a system that constantly rejects them. His last thought—where he sees another servant come along to kill him, just as he murdered Ashok—hints that he is caught up in a vicious cycle of oppression instead of having escaped it:

> "I'll say it was all worth it. But I'll know, deep inside, that one day, another Balram Halwai will rise to cut my throat" (Adiga, 2008, p. 321).

This recognition reveals the illusion of his self-made success, demonstrating that instead of escaping, he has merely become another cog in the machinery of violence and inequality. His journey, therefore, represents not a linear movement but a cyclical entrapment in capitalist and postcolonial alienation.

Aravind Adiga's *Selection Day* (2016) introduces Manjunath Kumar (Manju) as a liminal character between suppressed urges, external desires, and external expectations. His psychological liminality is realized by his internal battle with sexuality, fragmented identity, and the crushing burden of sport as a metaphor for masculinity. In contrast to his brother Radha, who buys into their father's aspiration for cricket stardom, Manju harbors an acute internal conflict between his urges and external desires. Manju's identity crisis is inextricably linked with his suppressed sexual orientation. Throughout the novel, his relationship with Javed, a rich and charming boy, implies unspoken romantic and sexual desire. But Manju's upbringing—characterized by his father's hyper-masculine and strict expectations—compels him to repress these desires. According to Fanon (1961), colonial and postcolonial subjects tend to internalize oppressive ideologies, which results in self-alienation. Manju's father, Mohan, is the symbol of patriarchal dominance exerted through control, habitually molding Manju into his ambitions. He subjects Manju to a rigid discipline, practicing traditional masculinity and heteronormativity, such that Manju finds himself torn between being authentic or adhering. According to Bhabha (1994), liminality arises when individuals are trapped in the middle of two contradictory identities but never quite belonging to either. Manju, lacking the ability to comply with social

norms but not ready to publicly accept himself for who he is, is stuck in this constant state of psychological liminality. His internal struggle is explicitly disclosed through instances of introspection, in which he questions his trajectory:

> "What if I don't want to be a cricketer? What if I don't want any of this?" (Adiga, 2016, p. 178).

His self-doubt and fear of conforming with his father's vision show his dissonance between outward ambition and inward honesty, solidifying his broken self.

Freud's (1919) theory of "the uncanny" is used to describe Manju's experience, as his suppressed desires are realized in anxiety and discomfort. His behavior towards Javed indicates a hidden attraction, but he continually denies or avoids admitting his feelings. This repression is seen in his discomfort when Javed confronts him regarding his sexuality:

> "You don't even know who you are, Manju. You're scared of yourself" (Adiga, 2016, p. 205).

Cricket, which is traditionally considered a sign of Indian nationalism and masculinity, is used as a metaphor for Manju's inner conflict. While cricket stands for success, power, and masculinity for his father, it becomes a trap of expectations for Manju. His refusal to accept the game fully represents his refusal to accept the strict codes of masculinity placed upon him. His subsequent disillusionment with cricket is symptomatic of his repudiation of the hyper-masculine ideal. As Fanon (1961) says, postcolonial societies tend to enforce strict roles to keep order, but they may result in fractures of the self. Manju's ultimate disengagement from cricket indicates his desire to move beyond patriarchal constraints, although he cannot yet envision what lies beyond. Ultimately, Manju's narrative in *Selection Day* is that of psychological liminality and broken masculinity, as sexual repression, imposed ambition, and cultural expectations intersect in a deeply conflicted self. His plight unsettles traditional tales of success and masculinity in postcolonial India, and his process is thus a strong critique of identity formation in the face of outside pressures.

Aravind Adiga's *Amnesty* (2020) traces the life of Danny, an illegal Sri Lankan migrant in Australia, whose life is characterized by cultural dislocation, legal betwixt-and-betweenness, and psychic turmoil. As a character suspended between deportation anxiety and dignity aspiration, Danny represents the fragmented self a condition informed by his ambivalent legal status, racial and ethnic identity, and ethical conundrum. Using inner monologue, Adiga builds a narrative of paranoia, existential fear, and psychological borderland, presenting Danny's fractured consciousness as a figure for the vulnerable status of neoliberal societies' migrants. Danny's psychological instability is a result of his alienation within Australia, where he is neither a completely integrated citizen nor an outsider who could easily go back home. His migrant status is characterized by a perpetual negotiation between invisibility and survival, in line with Homi Bhabha's (1994) theory of liminality, in which people in postcolonial settings are caught in between cultures and belong to none. Danny's cultural dislocation is shown in his efforts to assimilate, but he is still an outsider, as his thoughts show:

> "No matter how many years passed, how well he spoke English, how many coffees he made, he would never belong" (Adiga, 2020, p. 146).

This psychological banishment is under Frantz Fanon's (1961) postcolonial alienation theory, whereby the colonized self internalizes inferiority and cannot build an independent self. Danny's fragmented self, therefore, arises from both external racial oppression and internalized vulnerability, and this leads to a condition of constant discomfort. The legal status of Danny further complicates his psychological fragmentation, as he exists in a state of suspended animation between legality and deportation. He is always living in fear of being caught, can never move around freely, nor exercise his rights. According to Deleuze and Guattari (1983), capitalist cultures produce "schizophrenic subjects" whose selves are undermined by structural forces, and Danny is a prime example of this state of affairs—his self is determined by the legislations that deny him existence. This legal liminality is central to his ethical dilemma: whether

to report a murder he knows about and risk deportation or remain silent and maintain his tenuous existence. His indecision mirrors his broken psyche, caught between ethical duty and self-preservation. He weighs:

"Did being good mean losing everything?" (Adiga, 2020, p. 208).

This internal struggle illustrates how statelessness disempowers individuals, leaving them mentally fractured and socially paralyzed. Adiga uses stream-of-consciousness narration to describe Danny's psychological turmoil, submerging the reader in his paranoid, worried thinking. His inner monologue frequently oscillates between past recollections, present anxieties, and hypothetical futures, mirroring the state of disorientation of the migrant condition. Freud's (1919) theory of "the uncanny" comes into play here, since Danny feels a sense of unease at estrangement even in familiar places. He navigates Sydney but feels like an intruder, capturing the psychological dislocation of irregular migrants. His paranoid worrying about being noticed is so amplified that mundane activities like entering a supermarket store or making eye contact turn into sources of paranoia:

> "He checked the mirror again. Was the man behind him watching him? Had someone finally seen through his disguise?" (Adiga, 2020, p. 99).

This narrative style not only replicates Danny's shattered consciousness but also reflects the broader existential terror of undocumented immigrants, who live in perpetual fear of erasure, discovery, and punishment.

Narrative and Spatial Techniques as Psychological Representations

Danny Aravind Adiga uses separate narrative strategies to present the psychological liminality and schizophrenic consciousness of his protagonists. Through first-person narration, stream of consciousness, and entrapment metaphors, Adiga transports the reader into the fragmented minds of his characters, substantiating themes of identity crisis, alienation, and mental instability. Such techniques not only increase psychological complexity but also reveal the instability of perceived reality, making Adiga's narratives engaging as well as

unsettling. Adiga's employment of first-person narration enables readers to see the world through the untrustworthy eyes of his protagonists, whose mentalities are impaired by economic exploitation, social marginality, and existential fear. As Wayne C. Booth (1961) points out, unreliable narrators "deliberately or unconsciously mislead readers, forcing them to question the authenticity of the narrative" (p. 158). Balram Halwai is such an unreliable narrator in *The White Tiger,* who gives a self-excusing, contradictory account of things. He excuses his killing of his boss with the argument:

"It's not murder, sir. It's entrepreneurship" (Adiga, 2008, p. 273).This excuse for crime illustrates schizophrenic duality, wherein Balram keeps switching between subservience and rebellion but never merges his divided identity. His warped sense of morality and prosperity highlights the psychological cost of systemic oppression.

Adiga uses stream of consciousness to illustrate the disorganized, frequently paranoid thoughts of his characters. This method, which imitates schizophrenic thinking, is used in Danny's inner dialogue in *Amnesty*. Danny's frantic thoughts, sudden transitions between past and present, and repetitive questioning of himself mirror his instability of mind and fear of being found out. Freud (1919) defines the uncanny as "the return of the repressed" (p. 226), something reflected in Danny's fragmented consciousness, where his memories and fears constantly come back. His mind turns into paranoia:

> "Was the woman at the counter looking at him too long? Had she noticed something? Maybe he had said the wrong thing, used the wrong word" (Adiga, 2020, p. 84).

Such narrative disorientation adds to Danny's existential fear, putting the reader into his psychological liminality.

Adiga also often uses urban scenery as a metaphor for psychological captivity, presenting cities as constrictive places that heighten identity crises. Mumbai in *Selection Day* and Delhi in *The White Tiger* are presented as vast, constricting landscapes, representing the inevitability of social and psychological captivity. According to Michel Foucault (1975), "modern institutions create invisible prisons, shaping individuals' behaviors through systemic

surveillance and control" (p. 189). In *The White Tiger*, Balram explains his experience of traveling through Delhi:

> "The city was a jungle, full of cages, full of animals prowling, ready to eat you alive" (Adiga, 2008, p. 190).

This metaphor is a representation of his state of mind, where capitalism and corruption turn the city into a psychological battlefield, reinforcing his broken identity. Likewise, in *Selection Day*, Manju sees the world of cricket as a constricting construct, reflecting his inner conflict with sexuality and ambition.

Conclusion

Aravind Adiga's fiction exposes the psychological liminality of people trapped in between class, migration, and cultural shifts. His protagonists—Balram (*The White Tiger*), Manju (*Selection Day*), and Danny (*Amnesty*)—grapple with fragmented identities, constructed under capitalist pressures, social restrictions, and postcolonial disorientation. Through their mental instability, paranoia, and existential crises, Adiga dissects the psychological toll of India's accelerated modernization. Balram's transformation from servant to entrepreneur exemplifies capitalist schizophrenia, in which ambition and morality come into conflict and cause identity fragmentation. Manju's struggle between sexuality, family obligations, and sporting ambitions betrays the emotional disarray of conforming to strict social expectations. Danny, as an illegal immigrant, personifies legal and cultural liminality, stuck in a life that refuses him stability. These characters' inner battles reflect India's fragmented modernity, where economic desires conflict with social hierarchies, and a countrywide identity crisis is created. Through the intersection of postcolonial theory and psychological analysis, this research broadens the discussion of mental alienation in Adiga's works, filling in gaps in prior scholarship. Adiga's novels subvert the conventional emphasis on economic upward mobility, instead explaining how urban alienation and neoliberal precarity produce mental instability.

Future studies might explore how digital capitalism and artificial intelligence lead to psychological fragmentation in modern Indian fiction. A comparison with postcolonial authors such as Salman

Rushdie, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Mohsin Hamid might further situate Adiga's contribution to the development of identity crises within a globalized world. In an ongoing conflict between tradition and modernity in India, Adiga's novels continue to be a strong mirror to the fragmented self in a changing nation.

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