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## **Recognition of Dalits in Indian Literature: Special Reference to ‘The White Tiger’**

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### **Abstract:**

Although it has received less attention in Indian academics, the recognition and representation of Dalits is an essential discourse in the modern period. Here is the conceptual frameworks of recognition and misrecognition in modern novels that deal with Dalits, or the formerly "untouchable" character. Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* replicates a number of aspects of Dalit daily life, including language, the struggle between community and self, how Dalit women are portrayed, religious issues, and how Dalits are portrayed in discourse. This essay demonstrates how Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* historicizes the political label "Dalit" while misrepresenting the lives of Dalits by adhering to different common-sense interpretations of Dalit communities.

**Keywords: Dalit Writing, Acknowledgment, Portrayal, Culture, Language, Religion.**

### **Introduction:**

During the post-urban period, Dalit studies, politics, and literature gained such prominence that mainstream Indian literature, including Indian regional literature and English-language Indian writing, began to incorporate Dalit characters and themes of Dalit subjugation. These attempts continue to engage with the debates in Dalit literature and experience, so they cannot simply be considered appropriation of Dalit politics. These works are very different from the early nationalist/modernist writings of Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, and others in terms of content and perspective. The writers of the late 1990s and early 2000s were well aware of the authenticity issues that arose from the debates regarding Dalit politics and literature, in contrast to the nationalist writers who accommodated the caste question. As a result, these works and the way



they deal with the Dalit/caste issue require close attention. To highlight the nature of reception of Dalit studies in Indian English Writings and Tamil Regional Writings, this chapter chooses to analyze Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008), Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997), and Perumalmurugan's *Pookkuzhi* (2013) from this perspective. In all of these works, form is given a lot of importance. Adiga has experimented with the letter-writing mode and the second person narrative. The narrative develops into Balram Halwai's autobiography. When it comes to theorizing the reception of Dalit autobiographical writings, this form takes on greater significance. However, in contrast to Dalit autobiographies, the protagonist is portrayed as a beneficiary who has achieved economic empowerment. The character makes fun of democratic practices and religious beliefs. He makes sarcastic remarks about the corrupt bureaucracy and political system.

For his novel "White Tiger," coastal Karnataka's Arvind Adiga recently won the Booker Prize. The story follows a Dalit man from north India as he struggles to break free from his slavery to the feudal upper caste and become an entrepreneur in Bangalore, an IT city. In "White Tiger," the author divides India into two parts: The Light and the Dark. The cow belt states of North India—UP, Bihar, and MP—are the land of darkness. The states of the south, particularly cities like Bangalore and Hyderabad, are the land of light. This is the novel's primary flaw. According to the author's presumption, caste systems are prevalent in northern Indian villages, whereas free will and entrepreneurship thrive in southern cities. Dalit men's futures are set in stone in the northern villages. The Dalits are born into such deplorable conditions that their parents forget to name their offspring. They end up working as car drivers, cleaners, and servants for the upper feudal caste.

With regards to the non-acknowledgment of the strife of lower rank individuals, Charles Taylor remarks, "non-acknowledgment or misrecognition can cause hurt, can be a type of mistreatment, detaining somebody in a misleading, twisted, or decreased method of being". Our need for recognition is the driving force behind who we are as individuals. We want to be acknowledged by the other, our parents, friends, and the rest of society as well. Assuming that due acknowledgment is denied to us, we foster mental and social issues, turn internal and can become disastrous or valuable in another manner. "The experience of being disrespected carries with it the risk of an injury that can bring the person's identity as a whole to the point of collapse," he states. This is where besides the fact that the individual lost in is the world yet in addition lost to himself. The loss of identity occurs here. Honneth recognizes three types of disrespect.



1. Physical abuse is a form of disrespect that damages a person's self-esteem and may even result in his mental demise.
2. Neglect: This kind of disrespect hurts a person's moral self-respect and causes them to die in the community.
- 3 Degradation is the social devaluation of shared ideals that leaves individuals with psychological scars.

What is fundamental for one to comprehend that lack of regard is authentic, and particularly exposed to people or networks in various societies. Culturally specific disrespects and injuries are caused by the graded hierarchy of communities within four varnas and one avrana, as well as between 3,000 castes and 25,000 sub-castes, in a caste society. The subjective suppression of relatively lower-caste groups by relatively upper-caste groups must be understood in a different way; however, the religiously avarna or the formerly untouchable caste communities are linked by a single linguistic thread—"Dalit," which is supported by a single specific experience—untouchability. As indicated by Honneth people or networks oppressed irreverence of the above structures are denied of the three types of social acknowledgment, i.e., love, privileges and fortitude. Academics must, however, investigate how historical disrespect, hurt, and assertion are depicted in Indian literature and how the form of social mis/non/recognition translates into literature.

### **Conclusion:**

This paper presents the key concepts of Theory of Recognition or Theory of the Struggle for Recognition. It includes the discussion on the three spheres of recognition, namely love, rights, and solidarity. One of the key arguments in this presentation is that the disenfranchised peoples, such as the minorities and indigenous peoples, have the right to demand the recognition of their basic rights- especially in the context of Dalits in India. The paper argues that the disenfranchised people have to lodge their demands in the form of a struggle for recognition against the powerful masses.



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