

OF NEOLIBERALISM AND ITS MASCULINE INTERLOCUTORS: THE CASE OF BALRAM HALWAI IN ARAVIND ADIGA'S *THE WHITE TIGER*

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ABSTRACT:

My paper draws on Arvind Adiga's ambitious project in *The White Tiger* to present a critique of neoliberal India. Balram Halwai, the protagonist of this novel plays the role of a provocative interlocutor, caught in the liminal interstices between the twinned categories of rural India and urban, neoliberal India. My paper critically examines, how the performance of cultural dimensions of hegemonic masculinities is reconfigured under a neoliberal framework-- through the production of new, complicated subjectivities. Through a textual reading of Balram and Ashok in the novel, I intend to explore the formation of new masculine subjectivities that are produced within a neoliberal framework. By looking at these twinned pairs, I do not necessarily see Balram and Ashok as instances of opposing masculine subjectivities but rather as variants that are produced within the same neoliberal discourse. I also examine, the various homosocial spaces that are produced within this book- which brings these variants of neoliberal masculine subjectivities in conversation with each other. A close examination of this novel, reveals people as produced within the specificity of their lived experiences, as exemplars of unequal lives under precari-

ous, uncertain situations. We also find people occupying liminal spaces, caught between tradition and modernity; between an old India and new, neoliberal India. It is in these interstitial moments that we see, moments of opportunity and possibility for resistance, and modes of living and being that produce an agentive subjectivity.

Keywords : neoliberalism, interlocutors, entrepreneurial masculinity, hegemonic masculinity, 'new India'