

# Representation of Social Class in The White Tiger Movie (John Fiske's Semiotic Analysis)

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## ABSTRACT

### Keywords

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Social  
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Film

This study aims to analyze the representation of social class in the film "The White Tiger" using semiotics from John Fiske. The method used is descriptive qualitative approach. The subject of this research is the movie "The White Tiger". Data collection using documentation and literature study. The results of this study show that the division of social classes based on Marxism theory is divided into two, namely the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat. The movie The White Tiger depicts the struggle of someone who was born into the lower class in India because of the caste system. The struggle to rise to a higher class is considered wrong because it tries to fight against the system and culture. Discrimination occurs as a result of the closed class system because each of the upper caste groups refuses to accept equality.

## 1. Introduction

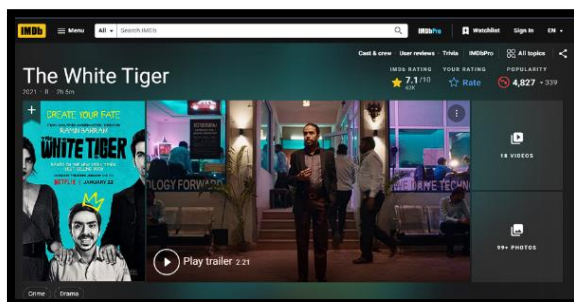
The continuity of digital media, especially communication technology, makes it easy for everyone to be able to enjoy some shows or readings. In the current era, various shows or readings can be seen easily through the internet. Starting from social media, news portals, games, or some online video or streaming platforms. Some small examples that are often done by people to fill their leisure time are watching movies on online streaming platforms. Currently, it is easy to access the best quality movies that can be watched through official paid sites on the internet. No need to wait for the airing on television or buy the original DVD (Digital Video Disc), just enough to pay and subscribe can enjoy many movies available on the movie streaming platform.

In the middle of the many diverse phenomena that occur in many people's social lives, movies are able to display this reality. When someone watches a movie, they can be indirectly influenced because of the message conveyed in a movie, so that they can give a perception of the movie. Sometimes the movies that are made seem to overexplain a story, regardless the audience can classify some things that they think are real and which are not real. A good movie is a movie that has a moral message, and is able to influence the audience to represent it. In the middle of the many diverse phenomena that occur in people's social lives, movies are able to display this reality. When someone watches a movie, they can be indirectly influenced because of the message conveyed in a movie, so they can give a perception of the movie. Sometimes the movies that are made seem to exaggerate a story, regardless, the audience can classify some things that they consider real and which are not real. A good movie is a movie that has a moral message, and is able to influence the audience to represent it. Film as a messaging medium allows filmmakers to share their ideas with everyone. According to Denis McQuail, a message is a product and commodity that has an exchange value, the relationship between the sender and the recipient is more one-way in nature and the frequency of the message is one-way (Toni, 2015).

Movies are able to describe the emotional feelings of humans in general, therefore movies can be a propaganda tool because they are considered to have the existence to reach all levels of social life.

Fictional films are made up to be able to describe what phenomena are happening or the results of mapping the needs of the film market, while films made based on real events must certainly be made truthfully so as not to harm certain parties. Often the issues contained in a movie are phenomena that are commonly found in human life, one example is a movie with issues about social class differences.

There are many movies that represent the phenomenon of social class differences such as *The Hunger Games* (2012), *The Purge* (2013), *Snowpiercer* (2013) and etc. Movies with social class themes are also often awarded in world cinema events, such as *Parasite* (2019), *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), and *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015). The film that will be studied by the researcher is a Bollywood production film or from the country of India its *The White Tiger*.



**Figure 1.** The White Tiger Score on Internet Movie Database (IMDb, 2021)

This movie deals with the issue of social class, telling the story of a poor man from a rural village in India who tries to be free from the conflict of discrimination and exploitation he experiences. He wants to be able to escape the caste or social class system that has become a culture in India and wants to live in prosperity. Social class itself is simply the division of groups or classes of society into an arrangement of class levels (hierarchy) based on certain criteria, be it according to educational status, economy, belief or religion, descent and others. This multi-layered system in sociology is known as social stratification, which comes from the word *stratum* or layer. The manifestation of this hierarchy is the existence of higher social classes and lower social classes.

According to Karl Max, the division of social classes occurs due to gaps in the relationship of ownership of the means of production or gaps in access to the means of production in society. The group of owners of the means of production in Marxism theory is referred to as the bourgeoisie, for example, such as aristocrats or landowners who are part of the upper class group. Meanwhile, those who are not owners of the means of production or part of the lower social class group are referred to as proletarians who sell their labor to the bourgeoisie, such as farmers or landless laborers (Hendrawani, 2020). Mark also argues that in the modern economy, injustice occurs because the bourgeois class carries out economic activities that tend to be exploitative towards the proletariat. It is called exploitative because the bourgeoisie pays for the labor owned by the proletariat at a price that is not proportional to the benefits obtained. Whereas in cases like this those who sell services are the proletariat, but those who get big profits are the bourgeoisie. It is things like this that bring them closer to class conflict (Pattinasarany, 2016).

One of the countries in the world that adheres to class ideology is India. There this system is referred to as the caste system. In this system, people are placed in a higher class or lower class based on their lineage. In the Vedas according to ancient Indian society, there is a caste system called the color system, in which ancient Indian society was divided into four colors arranged in layers from top to bottom as follows: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras. In addition, the arrangement of the high and low layers of caste is also determined by the general view of society regarding the importance of a person's work. There is one color that exists outside of these 4 colors, namely the Dalits. Dalits are outside the caste boundaries in India who are not even listed in the color system levels, so they are often seen as outcast individuals in the reality of community life in India, especially in village life (Meliana et al., 2023).



**Figure 2.** India's Caste System  
(BBC, 2019)

As a research comparison, there are several types of journals chosen by the author as reference sources, such as a paper titled *Social Criticism Representation in the Film 'The White Tiger'* (Roland Barthes Semiotics Analysis) written by Jenifer Thorina and Suzy Azeharie. The findings in the study were to criticize social phenomena in the country of India. In the study, it was written that in India there is still a low level of education, many underage workers, inadequate health facilities, racism, bribery in government, discrimination against women, and caste (Thorina & Azeharie, 2023). This journal is very relevant to be used as a reference because it also discusses the class or caste system which is the main focus for this research.

The *White Tiger* describes the struggle of a person who wants to get out of the discrimination that powerful people do to the poor because of social class differences. The character's struggle is against the culture, and against the power of upper-class groups or individuals. The elements of deviant behavior of human life in this film are very clear, where in each scene it is shown that groups that have certain powers use their power for personal gain, oppose a state regulation, and oppress people from the lower class. Therefore, researchers decided to further examine the representation of social class in the movie *The White Tiger*.

## 2. Method

The type of research used in this study is qualitative. According to Strauss & Corbin, qualitative research is a study in which the results of research findings are not obtained through statistical or mathematical procedures, although the content of the data can be calculated and can be presented in numbers as in a census. Qualitative research refers to non-mathematical data analysis, which produces findings through data collected by various means, including interviews, observations, documents or archives, and tests (Nugrahani, 2014).

The approach taken in this research is symbol analysis with John Fiske's semiotic theory. The significance of symbols is then determined by using John Fiske's semiotic analysis method contained in a visual show. John Fiske's theory divides into three types of levels, namely the level of reality, representation, and ideology. The semiotic study used by the author here is used to examine a social phenomenon from an object under study, namely a movie entitled *The White Tiger*.

Data collection in this research is done by documentation and literature study. According to Arikunto, documentation is looking for information in the form of notes, transcripts, books, newspapers, magazines, inscriptions, minutes, reports, and other similar documents about things or variations (Saleh, 2017). Meanwhile, literature study includes all theoretical and research readings in the form of biographies, newspapers, magazines, journals, and other formats (Nugrahani, 2014).

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive analysis model of Miles & Huberman. This interactive model is divided into three steps: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion or verification (Nugrahani, 2014). Data validation in this study was carried out by triangulation, increased diligence, and discussion. rat kabar, majalah, jurnal, dan format lainnya (Nugrahani, 2014).

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Result

##### 1. Scene Balram when he sees his father getting angry by The Stork 00.07.05 - 00.07.45



**Figure 3.** Balram saw his father exposed to anger and abuse

**Reality.** Balram wears an orange shirt, shorts and shaggy hair that is quite long for a small man like him. The Stork is seen with a latrine and thinning hair, dressed neatly in a long shirt and vest, and wearing a fancy gold watch. The Moongoose is seen with half-length hair, in a latrine, dressed in a shirt and jeans jacket. Then some villagers and also Balram's father, are seen lined up and wearing shabby shirts, combined with a turban attached to the neck and some are worn on the head.

The setting in this scene is told in a slum and arid village in India, this village is called Laxmangarh by showing some streets that are still rough and dusty and some simple houses. This scene shows when Balram was a child, he first saw The Stork or what the villagers called the landlord, come and collect taxes and debts from several villagers including Balram's father.

Balram's expression when his father is hit by The Mongoose is shocked. The Stork looks relaxed and relaxed, his face is grim without a smile with a haughty look as he gets out of the car. Luwak was just like his father, he looked even more ferocious, Balram's father and some villagers could only bow their heads and dared not look at the owner of the house out of fear.

In this scene, the audio includes the sound of music such as gendhang or an Indian musical instrument called a tabla to follow the narrator's voice explaining Balram's childhood and where he lived and some dialog between the villagers and the landlords, then there is the sound of children laughing, and car horns.

**Representation.** In the picture using the shot size type is a medium shot. Medium shot itself means taking pictures from the head to the waist, the meaning can lead to personal relationships in showing expression. Then there is a close up, which is when Balram sees his father getting angry. Close up itself is shot from a distance that emphasizes the head and shoulders, or another object in a closer perspective. The meaning of this type of shot is intimacy in showing the emotional reaction of the main object (Kosala, 2018)). Then for the camera angle using eye level, where this technique is used to take pictures from the same point of view as the eyes of the actor or object.

Then for the lighting technique used in the series of scenes is to use natural light. This lighting is obtained directly through sunlight and does not use other technical aids such as spotlights. Then for each character's appearance, the lighting technique used is soft lighting. Soft lighting is used for situational reasons, such as giving a dramatic impression and so on (International Design School, 2021). Then the video editing stage is carried out using cutting techniques. This technique is used to combine several shots to become a logical story sequence and a continuous storyline.

**Ideology.** In this case, India is closely related to social class. It is more mainstream because it also differentiates between races or tribes due to the caste system. This system was created by the Aryans in ancient times to distinguish between natives and immigrants. The social social class system that occurs in India is closed, because there is an assumption that if someone is born from a low caste, they will forever remain in the same class (Katon et al., 2020)

In the story of scenes, a rich family comes to a slum village. The village is an ancient village because it is inhabited by many lower caste people. The arrival of these rich people is led by The Stork and his son, The Mongoose.

In Marxism, part of the upper class or bourgeoisie are those who have power over the means of production (Hendrawani, 2020). The Stork is part of the upper class, in this case even though he does not own the means of production, he has the power to control the village's economy, such as lending the villagers capital for business or daily needs. Balram and the other villagers are part of the lower caste or proletariat. They are trapped in a closed social stratification system, working in the village only to pay their debts and daily needs with a modest income.

## 2. Scene when Balram comes to The Stork's house 00.17.00 - 00.17.50



Figure 4. Balram meets The Stork and Ashok

**Reality.** At this level, reality is shown Balram's appearance wearing a yellow and black shirt and khaki-colored chinos. The Stork wears a blue striped shirt and cream trousers, while Ashok wears a bright blue slimfit polo shirt and gray trousers.

This series of scenes takes place in the courtyard of a luxurious house, showing a car parked in a large yard, land that has been fitted with plots, as well as some shady and neat ornamental plants and garden lights.

The expression shown by Balram is to put on a tired face so that he can be accepted to work, while The Stork and his son are seen with curious faces with the intention of Balram's arrival at his house. The audio or sound that appears in this scene is the dialogue of the three of them and the chirping of birds.

**Representation.** In this scene, the type of shot size shown by Balram when squatting to The Stork is a knee shot. This technique is taken from head to knee and wants to show personal relationships, expressions and emotions of the object. While the camera angle used is high angle, which is the angle of taking pictures of objects exposed from the top, the meaning is that it can be small, low, lonely, or subordinate (Kosala, 2018). Then when Balram is told to stand by The Stork using a medium shot that shows the extent of the head to the waist, the meaning is still the same, namely to strengthen the emotional connection. The camera angle used in this scene is eye level, which is positioning the camera at eye level.

In lighting techniques, in this series of scenes using natural light, namely utilizing sunlight. This happens because the set is in an open space, and the exposure of light entering the camera is large so that the resulting image looks bright. For editing techniques, this series of scenes uses cutting, the aim is for continuity or connecting stories so that they are interconnected.

**Ideology.** In this scene, Balram comes to The Stork's residence to apply for a job as his son Ashok's driver. Balram comes and immediately fell down and he praises The Stork for helping the people in his village by lending capital, and considers him a god of help. Balram is part of the lower class, in Marxism part of the modern economy is industrial activity. Lower-class people or proletarians who want to work for a bourgeois can work such as working on the land, becoming a driver, a maid, or on a larger scale, becoming a factory worker.

In the world of work, especially on an industrial scale, a person with a high position will determine how much influence they have in the work ecosystem. This hierarchy is formed to determine their position at work. The high and low social status of a person is seen from how important their work is. For large-scale industries, in modern capitalist society the two conflicting classes according to Marxism are the bourgeoisie and the proletariat (Hendrawani, 2020).

The substance of class interests is based on the economic position of a class. The interests of the proletariat or labor class in Marxism are to obtain as much salary as possible, guarantee work safety, reduce working hours and so on. Meanwhile, the interests of the bourgeois class or financiers are to obtain as much profit as possible, by reducing costs or labor salaries as low as possible (Pattinasarany, 2016). These interests are in conflict with each other, this will bring them closer to the conflict of class conflict.

### 3. Scene when Balram is in the park with The Stork, The Mongoose, and Ashok 00.25.08 - 00.25.57



Figure 5. Balram massaging The Stork's feet

**Reality.** In this scene, Balram wears a light blue shirt and black pants, Ashok a black t-shirt and black jeans, The Stork wears a maroon long shirt and white holster, watch and ring, while The Mongoose wears a cream shirt and gray pants and watch and ring like his father.

The setting takes place in a garden in front of a luxurious house with large green grass and shady trees, the properties used are tables and chairs and buckets. The expression shown by Ashok is calm while talking to his father and brother, then The Stork looks happy because of Balram's massage but turns angry when Balram starts to interrupt the conversation. The Mongoose looks fierce and angry with his younger brother because of the argument. The audio heard in the series of scenes is the dialog of the four of them. and some birds chirping.

**Representation.** The type of shot size in this scene uses a long shot. This technique focuses more on a condition around people, atmosphere or other objects. This technique usually has the aim of showing the relationship between the atmosphere of the environment and the person in the frame (Assuncao, 2022). Then the type of shot size in the second scene is knee shot, taken from the size of the object seen, which is taking pictures only from the head to the knee. For camera angles, there are two types used, namely normal angle and low angle. The normal angle is taken with the camera at eye level, then for the low angle the camera angle is taken from under the object such as the frog's eye view which gives the impression of authority, dominance, or power (Kosala, 2018).

For lighting techniques, this scene uses natural lighting or utilizes direct sunlight, because of the outdoor setting. Because in this scene the setting is outdoors, the light entering the camera is getting bigger and later in the editing process it becomes easy to adjust the color grading. Then the editing technique still uses the cutting technique. This technique is an editing technique where images are selected and then cut and then connected with the images before and after so that the storyline is continuous.

**Ideology.** In the scene, Balram is shown massaging The Stork's feet. He and his two sons Ashok and The Mongoose are talking about business. Ashok tells his father to invest in IT and internet. The

Stork doesn't understand the concept of the internet and asks Ashok, but here Balram interrupts the conversation and starts explaining what the internet is. This made The Mongoose hit Balram on the head with a newspaper because he was considered rude for interrupting their conversation.

The events in the scene show that a person's social status has a higher or lower position. In an anthropological perspective, social class is closely related to a person's social status. Social status can be owned through three processes, they are ascribed status, achieved status, and assigned status. Ascribed status is obtained through bloodline, for achieved status it is obtained through one's efforts or achievements, and for assigned status it is obtained on the basis of gifts due to effort or achievement (Katon et al., 2020).

For the case of the scene, in the country of India, the social class grouping of society is determined through lineage. In this case Balram has a low social status, because the lineage of his family is lower caste or proletarian. While Ashok and The Mongoose have a higher social status because his father is part of the upper caste or bourgeoisie because he has abundant business wealth assets. With this Ashok and The Mongoose have privilege because they are part of a wealthy family. While Balram has no privilege because he was born into an ordinary family.

Because India looks at bloodlines, social mobility is restricted. People like Balram have a difficult life, because all the efforts that will be made later to change their fate and family will get discrimination from every layer of the caste above them.

#### 4. Scene Balram in hotel room and hotel basement 00.34.33 - 00.36.43



Figure 6. Balram in hotel room and hotel basement

**Reality.** In this scene, Balram is still wearing his driver's uniform, which is a light blue shirt and black pants. Meanwhile, The Mongoose wears a shirt with a combination of three colors brown, gray, and navy. The setting in this scene is shown in a hotel room with luxurious interiors and a simple room with a small bed with minimalist lights.

The expression Balram shows when he first enters the luxurious hotel room is a happy smile. The Mongoose shows an expression of anger towards Balram for not leaving the room immediately. The audio in this scene is a dialog between Balram and The Mongoose and is accompanied by slow tempo music..

**Representation.** In the series, the first type of shot size is a medium shot, the purpose of which is to show the relationship or expression of the object in the frame. Technically, the shot is taken from the head to the waist. Then it also uses a long shot in the second scene. The shooting is done from head to toe to be seen in one frame, and shows the atmosphere of a much wider physical space. For the camera angle used is eye level, the camera is placed parallel to the object's eyes.

For lighting techniques in the first scene using Fill lighting, which is a technique to eliminate shadows created by key lighting. Technically, the spotlight is installed opposite the main light source, which is the light produced from the lamp in the frame. Then in the second scene using practical light, this technique uses additional light sources such as candles or lamps. Usually to produce a more aesthetic scene at night. This technique is used when an actor must interact with a light source, such as a scene that requires a sleeping lamp (International Design School, 2021). The type of editing used

still uses the cutting type, the image or scene that has been selected is cut and then connected to the image after or before to produce continuity.

**Ideology.** In this scene, discrimination against social class differences is seen in the difference in residence. When Balram arrived at the hotel, he was immediately told to go down to the basement and park the car and then sleep in the small room provided by the hotel. The luxury hotel bedroom and the basement hotel bedroom are parables of economic inequality. Usually people with lower economic class will live in groups and side by side. The luxury hotel room is a place for the upper class like The Mongoose as part of the Bourgeois class, while the hotel basement room is for a group of drivers or Proletarians like Balram. A person's social class can be seen from the type and location of their residence. In big cities usually each area has been grouped for luxury housing and apartments or for simple housing areas for families with middle to lower economy. According to Sunarto, in residential areas in big cities, there are differences in house size, house design, and facilities (Prasetya, 2022).

### 5. Scene When Balram Returns Home 0.47.25 - 00.49.03



Figure 7. Balram meet family

**Reality.** In this scene Balram is still wearing his blue driver's uniform, and black pants, while the grandmother is wearing an orange t-shirt, with cloth hanging from her arms, and Kishan is wearing a red, white, and black striped shirt and black jeans. The setting is in a village where Balram lives. The simple wooden houses where the villagers live are shown. For audio, there is only the sound of the characters' dialog and some wind ambience sounds.

**Representation.** The type of shot size used in the first scene is medium close up. This type of shot is also commonly called two-bottom or the bottom frame is cut tight so that it cuts at the top of the elbow joint (Assuncao, 2022). Then another type of shot used is the medium long shot. This technique is used to cut the subject's body such as cutting the lower leg. For the camera angle in this scene using the low angle type, the angle is taken from below the object to give the impression of authority and dominance. Then also using Eye Level, this technique has the same image angle as the object's eyes in one frame.

Then for the lighting technique using natural lighting, this technique is used to utilize direct sunlight and does not require other additional light but also adjusts the weather conditions and time at the location. In the editing technique used cutting, the images that have been obtained are cut into pieces and then connected with the images before or after to get a story that is connected to the storyline.

**Ideology.** This scene tells the story of Balram returning to his hometown. There he immediately meets his family. The grandmother asks Balram to get married and stay in the village and not work in the city. Balram refuses, because if he does not work in the city he will forever be stuck in the village and cannot change his future. For several months Balram sent money to support his family and to buy his grandmother's cow so that his family's status in the village would be respected by the villagers. Balram's work as a driver in the city is considered to have a higher value than the work of the majority of men in his village who work as bakers in the shop. Because of this, Balram in the smaller ecosystem is considered to have risen to a higher class because he has a more important job than the men in his



village. Balram is part of the Proletarian class layer that has a progressive and revolutionary nature, because he chooses to take the risk of going to the city and working as a driver rather than being stuck in his village working as a baker who is unable to provide for his family.

Social class is simply the division of groups or classes of society into an arrangement of class levels based on educational status, occupation, economy, belief or religion, descent and others. The manifestation of these classes is the existence of high social status and lower social status. One of the factors driving humans to be able to have a high social status is to have an established job, education and cultivate wealth to get out of poverty (Puslitbang et al., 2018).

#### 6. Scene When Balram was sacrificed to become a hit-and-run suspect 01.04.24 - 01.08.24

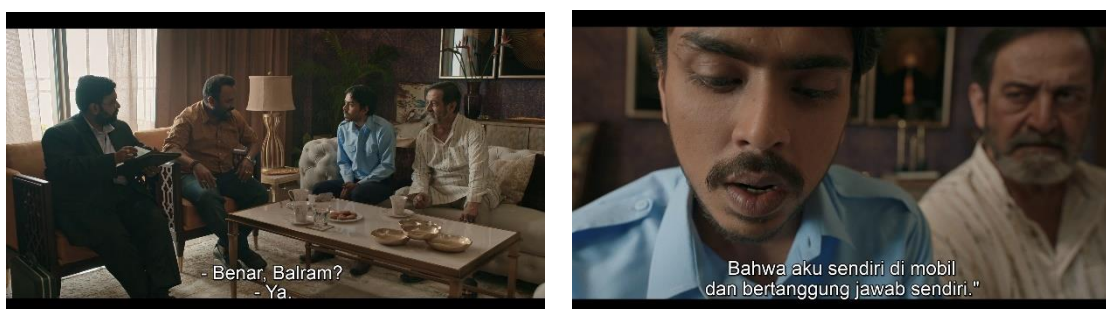


Figure 8. Balram when he had to sign a confession letter

**Reality.** In this sequence of scenes, Balram wears a driver's uniform of a blue shirt and black pants, The Mongoose wears a brown shirt and black jeans, The Stork wears a white shirt and khaki pants, while a lawyer wears a black tuxedo with a white shirt. The setting is a living room with a set of tables and chairs and luxurious interiors such as decorative lamps, curtains, houseplants, and wall decorations.

The expressions shown are initially confused to panic after reading the statement, while The Mongoose and The Stork try to be friendly to calm Balram, the lawyer looks very relaxed. Then for the sound that is heard is the dialog from the four inframe characters accompanied by a tense musical backsound to support the atmosphere.

**Representation.** Then the first shot size used is a long shot. The shot is taken from head to toe to be seen in one frame. Then for the second type of shot size is close up or called a "head shot," because it cuts off the top of the subject's hair and the bottom of the frame can start anywhere just below the chin or with a little upper shoulder visible (Assuncao, 2022). Then for the type of camera angle also uses Eye Level, this technique has the same image angle as the object's eyes in one frame.

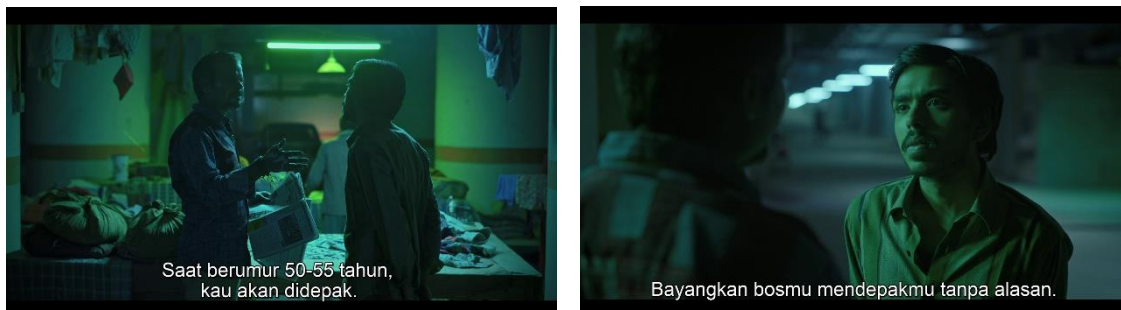
Then, for the first lighting technique used is backlighting. This technique is also faced to the subject, but mounted at the back in a higher position to separate the subject from the background. Techniques like this are used to produce silhouettes on objects in the frame (International Design School, 2021). Then the second lighting technique used is side lighting. This is used by utilizing light that enters a frame from the side, the meaning is to accentuate a person or an object. For the editing process, it still uses cutting and is then arranged to create an interconnected and continuous story.

**Ideology.** This scene tells the story of Balram being sacrificed by the stork and mongoose to write a statement, that he was the one who hit a child at night. In fact, in this case it was Pinky, Ashok's wife. After being sacrificed, Balram feels sad because every day he experiences bad events, such as being beaten up, isolated, and having his salary delayed. These motives make Balram want revenge and want to change his fate so that he is not always discriminated against by the upper class.

Marxism highlights the problem of injustice experienced by the lower class, the proletariat. The bourgeoisie began to carry out exploitative activities, such as buying the labor of the proletariat at less than the price or committing other cheating. The bourgeoisie generally has a conservative attitude to

maintain their position of power or oppose change, while the proletariat usually has a progressive and revolutionary attitude (Hendrawani, 2020).

### 7. Scene When Balram Discusses with The Vitiligo 01.27.40 - 01.28.37



**Figure 9.** Balram and The Vitiligo in basement hotel

**Reality.** In this sequence of scenes, Balram wears a brown shirt and the Vitiligo wears a blue and black shirt with cream-colored pants. The setting is shown in a warehouse in the basement of the hotel that is directly connected to the parking lot with minimal lighting.

The expressions shown by the two people are very serious with a sharp gaze, while the audio heard in the scene is the dialog between the two of them and the ambience of the crowd of people talking in the basement area.

**Representation.** The first shot size used is medium shot. This technique cuts the head to just below the waist. Meanwhile, in the second scene using a medium close up shot, which is taking pictures only limited to the head to the shoulder or slightly above the elbow joint. For camera angles using eye level, the camera is placed parallel to the eyes of the inframe object. In lighting techniques using practical light, lighting techniques are usually added by set designers to create cinematic scenes at night or in low light spaces (Glints, 2024). In the second image using side lighting, the light enters the object from the side, the goal is to bring the mood of the object. For the editing process, it still uses cutting and then arranged to create an interconnected and continuous story.

**Ideology.** This scene tells the story of Balram trying to ask for opinions on the difficulties of being a servant to a big boss. The conversation begins when Balram receives a delayed salary, but not all of it is paid. The more experienced Vitiligo explained to Balram that the upper class could fire him at will. Replacing old, sickly waiters or drivers with younger, more energetic ones. From this dialog, Balram devised a strategy to take back his rights and initiate change.

Proletarians who usually live in groups are usually more critical and progressive when they begin to feel dissatisfaction with the system. Marxism highlights that social class is always associated with its potential for conflict (Hendrawani, 2020). In Capitalism, there is a conflict of interest between the class of financiers and workers. These conflicts later form classes. Karl Max divides classes into two types, they are the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat. The Bourgeoisie are those who provide wages and own the means of production, while the Proletariat are those who receive wages and work for the Bourgeoisie.

### 8. Scene When Balram Killed Ashok 01.51.00 - 01.52.00



**Figure 10.** Balram killing Ashok and leaving his body behind

**Reality.** In this scene Balram is wearing his blue driver's uniform with black pants. While Ashok uses a black Tuxedo. The setting in this scene is on the side of a deserted road accompanied by heavy rain and strong winds. For audio that is heard is a brief dialog between the two characters, while the ambience that is heard is the sound of rain and lightning along with the sound of stormy winds and added dramatic background to support the atmosphere.

**Representation.** The type of shot size used in the first scene is full shot, this technique takes part from head to feet, so that the setting becomes wider. While the second scene uses a medium long shot. This technique records the head to the bottom below the waist but cuts the part above the knee. Then for the camera angle using a low angle. The camera points to the object from the bottom and highlights upwards like a frog's eye view, this has a meaning to show authority, or a person's position.

For lighting techniques using ambient light. This technique uses light that already exists in the location, such as the sun or street lights. The purpose of this technique is to provide exposure to the subject because light is dominant throughout the scene environment (Glints, 2024). Then for the second scene using fill lighting. This technique is used to eliminate shadows by installing additional light opposite the key light. In the editing technique, cutting is used, the images that have been obtained are cut into pieces and then connected with the images before or after to get a continuous story.

**Ideology.** This scene tells the story of Balram's revenge on his boss Ashok. Balram kills Ashok by stabbing him in the throat with a broken glass bottle. Balram had a motive because he was getting tired of the class or caste system that the boss applied to him. From bad treatment, being made the suspect of a hit-and-run, as well as salary delays, and several other bad events. The climax was Balram killing the boss and then taking away the money that the boss brought to bribe Indian politicians. A few years after the murder, Balram also used the money to set up a taxi transportation business, bribe the police in India, and change his identity.

Marxism states that all forms of society, past and present, are the result of class conflict. When the proletariat resists the injustice of the system, the end result is the strengthening of the power of the larger bourgeoisie. Because in fact those bourgeoisie who have come to power are those of the proletariat who have managed to get out of lower-class jobs (Hendrawani, 2020).

### 3.2. Discussion

The movie "The White Tiger" by director Ramin Bahrani focuses on a person who wants to be free from the social class or caste system that occurs in India. This research uses John Fiske's semiotic theory which divides into three types of levels, namely Representation, Reality, and Ideology. Researchers focus on how social class representations are displayed, such as through scenes, dialog or visuals that contain social class ideology.

This movie shows that bloodlines will decide a person's social class. This system is known as caste. This system was developed by the Aryans, where they divided a person's social class based on the

type and importance of their work. This system is divided into 4 groups, namely Brahmins as the highest caste of priests, Kshatriyas from the state security apparatus and government leaders, Vaisyas are farmers and traders, then Sudras are laborers. Such a system greatly affects the social structure of a country, members of the caste group usually live in the same caste group environment. The low access to socio-economic and education makes it difficult for people born into low-caste families to engage in social mobility, so it is very difficult for them to rise to a higher caste class.

In researching the movie *The White Tiger*, the authors found 8 scenes that contain representations of social class. Reality for this film is shown through social and cultural codes, such as codes formed through appearance, gestures, expressions, environment, audio, and dialog. The main character, Balram, is shown as a person who looks simple, has ownership and behaves well. The body gestures shown are always positive vibes. Expressions that initially depict joy slowly turn into hatred and anger because they experience mistreatment such as being abused and exploited for their wages.

For the level of representation, this level is intended for codes that are generated by using other media to be able to describe something. If explained at this stage is the projection of the intent and purpose of the code that appears by using technical equipment to be able to produce visuals that are able to represent it, such as using cameras with special techniques, lighting, music, and editing. The findings in the film *The White Tiger* are the types of shots used to represent social class such as long shot, medium long shot, close up, medium shot, knee shot and so on, then there are also lighting techniques such as natural light, fill light, practical light, and so on. In the editing stage of the existing series of scenes using cutting techniques so as to create a series of the entire storyline.

The level of ideology in the film *The White Tiger* is the final round analyzed by an author. The ideology contained in this film is marxism or capitalist ideology. This ideology focuses on the conflict between two opposing classes, the bourgeois and the proletariat. This theory is very relevant to the movie *The White Tiger*, because it relates to the ideology of the Indian state which adheres to the caste system. The conflict between Balram as a lower caste and The Stork Family, an upper caste group, is an example of some of the inter-caste conflicts that occur in India.

In the movie of *The White Tiger*, the author represents the ideology of social class by using Karl Max's theory. This theory can also be referred to as Marxism for its followers. Karl Max divides two sub-classes in his theory, the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat (Hendrawani, 2020). In this study, the author will explain the two classes found in the movie *The White Tiger*:

**Bourgeoisie.** The bourgeoisie is a group of people who own the means of production like the nobles. In this movie, The Stork family is a wealthy family living in the city. It is not explicitly mentioned which caste they belong to. Although it is not mentioned from which caste group, according to this theory, The Stork is part of the Bourgeois group because he has relationships, power, wealth, and many followers.

**Proletariat.** The proletariat is part of the group that works for the bourgeoisie or what they call laborers. In this movie, Balram is part of this group because he works as a driver for The Stork's family. Balram in the movie is also never clearly mentioned which caste he belongs to. Balram is only mentioned as coming from a lower caste from the village of Laxmangarh, where the average caste works as a baker in a shop.

#### 4. Conclusion

In analyzing the film *The White Tiger*, author found social class representation through a sequence of scenes or visuals and dialog between characters. At the first level, that is reality, social class is depicted through the appearance of the characters that appear in the frame, dialog between characters, the environment or residential set, gestures, expressions and also audio to support the visual reality experienced by the characters. The visuals displayed are made as real as possible because the scenes are set in different places such as a slum village, city streets, hotel basements, luxury homes, and so on.

At the level of representation, this movie uses shooting techniques such as Long shot, Medium Long shot, Medium Shot, Close Up, Medium Close Up, and Knee Shot. The camera angles used are Eye Level and Low Angle. Lighting techniques are also very varied, such as Natural Lighting, Back

Light, Fill Light, Side Light, Practical Light, and Ambience Light. Then the editing technique uses Cutting to provide a narrative story that makes sense..

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For the ideological level, *The White Tiger* illustrates the ideology of social class from Karl Max's theory of Capitalism or also known as Marxism. This ideology is also strengthened through the concept of caste that occurs in India. Like the ending scene when Balram is in a restaurant with his new appearance as a successful businessman, he makes a narrative when he can get out of the trap of caste and poverty due to heredity, his lines sound like this "but for the poor there are only ways to get to the top, crime or politics".

Overall, the movie illustrates the struggles of people who are going through a difficult time in their lives. When he wants to make changes for a better life and future, he must fight against the system and culture that has been silencing everyone, that is caste. The caste system holds back a person from being able to develop themselves to a better life, because there is an opinion that if you are born into a poor lower caste family, you will remain poor and underdeveloped. In fact, for a person to be free from poverty is to improve the quality of education, as well as manage good relationships and communication, so as to be able to get a job that can change one's life to be much better.

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