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Voices from the Margins: Aravind Adiga's Socio-Political Narratives

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ABSTRACT

This research paper examines the effects of caste, class, religion, and politics on society, highlighting the widening divide between the rich and the poor, as well as between the upper and lower castes. It also discusses issues that are rarely very noticeable or significant, but for which appropriate responses or behaviours are necessary. Aravind Adiga stood for modern India and its times. Alongside the political environment, he also represented the social one. He illustrated this contemporary India with a variety of instances, such as several egregious misdeeds that are still carried out in democratic countries. According to the research, his narrative's core message centers around the poverty and suffering experienced by the Indian people. The religious and socio-political aspects of modern-day India were also elucidated. The paper highlights how Adiga has chosen works that highlight both individual and group hypocrisy. It also looks at "Modern India," which suffers from a slavery system and widespread socio-political corruption.

Keywords: *Socio-Political, Upper- Lower Class, Rich- Poor, Contemporary India, Caste, Class, Religion, Slavery, Hypocrisy.*

INTRODUCTION

Presently, the majority of novelists attempt to portray modern society and its customs in their works. They offer their opinion and points of view on various societal topics. These novelists developed all of these protagonists and characters that resemble those who live in society and deal with all of its social challenges and problems. Among these in society is Aravind Adiga as well. He is one of the most well-known contemporary Indian authors. His first book, *The White Tiger*, marked his literary breakthrough. He received the prestigious 40th Man Booker Prize for the book.

Numerous social issues, including unemployment, corruption, gang rapes, terrorism, poverty, crime, illiteracy, prostitution, child abuse, gambling, discrimination, the presence of Western organizations in India, and, of course, casticism, as well as the country's dowry system, existed in this society and ultimately became significant social issues. Many contemporary problems can be found in this day and age, including existential crisis, loneliness, alienation, and the search for one's identity. The narratives penned by Adiga reflect and depict these tragedies. He depicted a realistic civilization dealing with serious difficulties in his book *The White Tiger*. Additionally, he has made a significant contribution by providing a variety of formulas that aid in addressing societal challenges and difficulties.

Aravind Adiga is a rapidly emerging and highly acclaimed writer on a global scale. He is regarded as a great writer alongside Charles Dickens, R.K. Narayan, and V.S. Naipaul because of the way he has characterized his characters, covering every aspect of society and circumstance, and for his accurate depiction of class, caste, gender, religious, and political levels of discrimination as well as their changing styles prevalent in the globalized society. He examines the straightforward and intricate lives of the average man in his works. Adiga's narrative highlights the issues of discrimination and injustice based on caste, creed, gender, class, region, and religion in modern society, which arises from the abuse of governmental power by self-serving politicians who control the government apparatus.

Spatializing narratives in *Last Man in Tower*

In his book *Last Man in Tower*, Aravind Adiga used spatial storytelling to convey his story's larger implications. Mumbai is a paradoxical city of fulfilled ambitions and dashed hopes, a city of binary opposites, plenty, and scarcity, as Adiga's narrative space allows for. It is a city of violence, greed, hopelessness, and despair. In his narrative structure, Adiga challenges the notion of personal integrity in opposition to the mafia nexus. Its narrative space portrays material affluence, criminal activity, and apathy. The vast urban area's sceneries, curves, and moving spaces—which symbolize the preponderance of violence over human freedom—have been masterfully incorporated into the space narrative. A genuine portrayal of the contradictory and complicated social and cultural landscapes of the city has been provided. Adiga is a superb storyteller; his central story is nested among several stories that offer incisive criticism of a corrupted political, social, and cultural system. His voice becomes sarcastic and mocking. Adiga provides both radical critique of a class-driven society and cultural criticism on the one

hand. Mumbai is a metropolis whose environment is distinguished by stark paradoxes rather than by integrity or homogeneity. Mumbai has a deceptive and elusive nature, which is reflected in the stories of the city in Bollywood movies.

Writing and narrating *Last Man in Tower* presents Adiga with a bigger difficulty because the stories he tells portray post-modernist Mumbai. As a result, there is cooperation between private and public areas. Aspirations, goals, and dreams come together and clash with the communal area. Master Ji's choice to defy the majority of members who were eager to sell the tower is blatant evidence of this collaboration. As previously mentioned, Adiga employs space narration—which may be categorized as ideational, tangible, abstract, and space in motion—on several levels to tell stories. These paths go into the different facets of space storytelling. These have been used to synchronize space and time, giving space narrative additional dimensions. Retrogressive space—space in motion that moves between the past and present—and concrete space—space via movement—are the two subcategories of space in motion.

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Through the use of specifics about the walls, kitchen, closets, and other features, Aravind Adiga makes use of the notions of numerous narrative spaces, including geographical space, space inside a place, and the exterior and interior of rooms. Furthermore, he connects these to the lives of persons who occupy those areas. The story incorporates the space description at the beginning to paint a more comprehensive picture of life in the book. Specific locations in the book provide readers with descriptions of private areas and the backstories of the individual residents, which offer diversity and depth to the main story. The main narrative is woven together by numerous lives and tales to reflect on people's social, cultural, and material existence.

Adiga skillfully turns these unrefined topographical settings into lyrical imagery for narrative. Similar to Dickens' books, where enclosed spaces are used as a technique of storytelling in conjunction with sense and imagination, space inside space, inner space, and space in motion all contribute to the overall feeling of space. Character recollections and descriptive elements have been used in the narration to approximate these subspaces and interiors. The Vishram Society secretary's office's furnishings, seating arrangements, flooring, and layouts all create an impression of interior space that complements the story. A glimpse into the intricate life of Yogesh Murthy and Georgina Rego is also given by the cramped environment of their chambers. Readers are introduced to the spaces in motion through the automobile windows of Mr. Shah and Shanmugham as they pass by restaurants, offices, and other locations that offer dynamic depictions of Bombay's surroundings. Readers are assisted in visualizing these snippets of metropolitan Mumbai by Adiga's space narrative. Similar to Dickens' depiction of Victorian metropolis cities, Adiga's space narrative in *Last Man in Tower* is full of locations, vignettes, snapshots, and geographical descriptions that reveal the nuances of the social, cultural, and economic life of the people in the city. In *Last Man in Tower*, socioeconomic and cultural places take up the main narrative of Adiga, which is vivid, thrilling, grotesque, and captivating with an abundance of detailed information.

Impact of Caste, Religion, and Politics in *The White Tiger*

Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* paints a vivid picture of the sociopolitical climate of modern-day India, illuminating issues of power, corruption, and class division. India's rigid caste system is one of the book's central topics, having an impact on the protagonist's life as well as the society he lives in. Each caste stratum is associated with distinct privileges and restrictions,



making the caste system a complex social structure. Adiga effectively captures the brutal reality of the caste system, particularly in rural areas where landlords have the final say over inhabitants of lower castes. The main character, Balram Halwai, is a member of a lower caste and faces discrimination, exploitation, and abuse at the hands of his upper-caste employers. In the book, it is shown how the caste system keeps people like Balram in a cycle of poverty and servitude by denying them opportunities for advancement and consigning them to lowly jobs. The novel also illustrates the power dynamics that exist within the caste system between the upper and lower castes. As an illustration, Balram's boss Ashok is a higher caste member with significant influence over Balram's life. Balram is incredibly intelligent and motivated, but he never forgets his caste's limitations and his place in society. The narrative frequently returns to the issue of this disparity in authority.

In contrast to the idea of power imbalance, the story also explores themes of dissent and resistance. Balram's journey from a submissive servant to a self-sufficient businessman demonstrates his desire to use his agency and break free from the restrictions of his caste. Balram criticizes the injustices that the caste system maintains through his act of rebellion, which is symbolized by his decision to kill his boss and seize control of his own life. It is an outright statement of independence and a rejection of the responsibilities that society has assigned to individuals according to their caste. Adiga features characters that aspire to social mobility and strive to break free from the limitations imposed by their caste. For instance, Balram wants to become a successful entrepreneur and get out of poverty. His trip to Delhi represents his aspiration for better living conditions and upward mobility. The narrative also highlights the difficulties and roadblocks that individuals like Balram face while attempting to advance society. Because of how deeply embedded the caste system is, it is sometimes impossible for those from lower castes to move up the social ladder and achieve full equality. Adiga draws attention to the corruption and deceit that permeate Indian culture by using the caste system. The upper castes, personified by people like Ashok and his family, often claim to uphold traditional and moral values yet engage in immoral behaviour behind closed doors. In addition to maintaining social inequality, the novel argues that the caste system promotes moral decay and ethical corruption among those who benefit from it. Balram decides to overthrow the system because he is angry with the hypocrisy of the upper classes. *The White Tiger* exposes the underlying injustices that afflict society and provides a biting portrayal of corruption and inequality in contemporary India. Adiga vividly illustrates instances of



corruption, favoritism, and misuse of power among politicians and public servants through a variety of story facets, showing how bribery undermines the foundation of governance and encourages injustice. Adiga highlights how widespread it is to employ bribery in the political system to obtain favours and advance one's interests. For instance, Balram details how his boss, Ashok Sharma, regularly bribes police and government officials to escape being held accountable for his illicit actions. The book also exposes the patronage culture, in which politicians and public employees grant favors and positions of power in exchange for financial contributions and loyalty. Balram's family members behave sycophantically toward the local politician in the village, thinking that their allegiance will win them his protection and favour. Adiga claims that nepotism permeates Indian politics, with persons often elevated to positions of authority and influence solely based on their family connections rather than their abilities. For instance, Balram details how members of his employer's family are given high-paying government employment despite their lack of education or expertise. The corrupt and influential politician in Delhi known as the Stork in the book serves as the best example of the connection between politics and corporate interests. The Stork is the perfect example of the deeply embedded crony capitalist system because he takes advantage of his position to do unscrupulous business and misuse public funds for the profit of himself and his pals. Adiga provides examples of how various tiers of government officials misuse their authority to oppress and exploit the weakest segments of society. Balram details instances where dishonest officials collude with landlords to intimidate and extort money from the impoverished, exacerbating their precarious circumstances. The book also exposes how law enforcement agencies uphold injustice and serve the interests of the affluent. Balram demonstrates how wealthy people's crimes go unnoticed by police, who then accept money to destroy evidence and avoid conflict.

The book draws a lengthy, contradictory line between the rural, illiterate proletariat and the well-educated, rich bourgeoisie. The bourgeois class is responsible for the cultural, social, political, and professional suffering of the subjugated or subaltern people. They are unable to speak up for themselves or stop the abuse and humiliation that is being done to them. Even though they are still mute, they have a great desire to escape the mess that their fate has placed them in. They are inclined to rebel, but they control it by staying in their masters' service. They learn about their masters' strengths and weaknesses and prepare for the moment when they can take revenge on the "beast" to achieve their ultimate objective of being taken into account.



They also carry the seed of evil, and it is this evil that ultimately drives them to oppose the system of caste and class discrimination that has been put in place by man. The oppressed people rise against their oppressors. In the book, Balram takes care of this.

The stark contrast between metropolitan luxury and rural poverty, which emphasizes the disparities in wealth, privilege, and opportunities that define contemporary Indian society, is one of the central topics. Adiga contrasts urban and rural settings to highlight the impact of socioeconomic status on the opportunities and goals of his characters. Personas like Ashok Sharma and his family dine at fine dining establishments, live in lavish apartments, and enjoy the comforts of luxury. For protagonists such as Balram Halwai, the urban environment signifies the potential for advancement in social status and financial prosperity, enabling them to escape the limitations of rural impoverishment. However, the desire for money in metropolitan areas often comes with a moral cost, as people fight corruption, exploitation, and moral failings in their quest for upward mobility. In contrast to the glitz and glamour of the big cities, Adiga paints a disturbing picture of rural poverty in areas like Laxmangarh, where Balram Halwai and his family reside. With collapsing social systems, limited economic opportunities, and oppressive infrastructure, the neighborhood is shown as a place of misery and stagnation. Rural poverty is seen by characters like Balram as a state of helplessness and pain, as well as a vicious cycle of exploitation and servitude.

Representation of Indian Social Problem in *Between the Assassinations*

According to Surendran (2002), Adiga's 2008 book *Between the Assassinations* brilliantly illustrates two intriguing features of her writing: the underdog's rage and the personalization of class conflict. Through the novel *Between the Assassinations*, Adiga skillfully and kaleidoscopically depicts the realities of our civilization. With a story of "everyman" in "every town" during the transitional period between Indira and Rajiv Gandhi's assassinations, which was from 1984 to 1991, he has captured the various malfeasances that are pervasive in our society, such as corruption, child labour, and social discrimination on the grounds of caste, religion, class, and gender. Adiga seems to be saying that we need to address these pressing problems if we want to see our nation progress. "Power relations - between rich and poor, master and servant, high-caste and low-caste, majority and minority, even haughty English and the low vernacular - and, as a consequence of these relations, moral perversion and subaltern



rage," is Adiga's central theme, according to Chandrabhas (2008). He attacks these relations relentlessly.

Through the figure of Ziauddin, Adiga has brought attention to how some terrible people in our society take advantage of religious zeal. Twelve-year-old Ziauddin, the sixth of an impoverished family's eleven children, works at a tea shop. He starts working at a young age and feels cut off from society. When left on his own, he must fight for survival just like an adult. Muslims in Kittur face prejudice and social exclusion from the mainstream community. The marginalization of Muslims also affects employment prospects. For example, Ramanna Shetty hires Ziauddin even though he is innocent, but the businesses next to the train station never engage Muslim workers. The youngster returns from a four-month stay with his parents entirely changed and without his innocence. He starts to take pride in his faith and longs to learn more about his ancestry. Ziauddin's quest for identification intensifies following his encounter with a Muslim Pathan from the North. Ziauddin develops a sense of belonging with that person.

In the narrative, Adiga has focused on how venereal diseases are handled as taboo or prohibited thing even if there are many victims worldwide (Adiga, 2008). Because they are afraid of societal pressure, most people turn to scammers instead of seeking medical assistance, which only makes the situation worse. Ratnakar Shetty, a fraudulent quack who poses as a sexologist in the novel, is a character with three daughters. His true goal is to make enough money to cover his daughter's marriage dowry. In addition, he works as a salesperson, closing deals on books and stationery before heading back to his house at the end of the day. His biggest challenge is managing the dowry for his first daughter up to this point, therefore he needs to save enough for his two subsequent daughters. He discovers that the man is a patient with a sexually transmitted infection after arranging the groom for his older daughter. That youngster approaches Shetty, much to his horror, asking for help finding the medication. Despite the advice to consult a real doctor, the prospective groom is afraid of the stigma in society. Finally, an actual medical professional examines the youngster to verify that he is experiencing renal failure rather than a sexually transmitted infection.

In Indian society, there are castes. Though the Indian Constitution and legal provisions declare it abolished, the actual situation differs greatly from the purported abolition. It functions as a vital component of society. Even if someone works extremely hard to become famous, the



upper castes and classes will not accept a mediocre or poor individual. India is facing a major problem with a pervasive and ever-expanding corrupted society. The figure of Abbasi, a devout Muslim businessman who shuts his company where women perform intricate needlework that blinds them, prioritizes the welfare of others. Nevertheless, he is associated with other businessmen who do not follow suit. Abbasi had to fight for a very long time to get the organization back open. His encounters with dishonest government officials for bribes and his brazen demands for them revealed the hollowness of society. He was compelled to pay the water board employees, income tax officers, sanitary examiners, welfare examiners, union leaders, and various political figures in a chain-like manner for the business to reopen.

Despite his good character and honesty, he is forced to offer money to survive. He lets out a cry of profound disappointment at the nation's rampant corruption, the Black Market, and counterfeit crimes in general, noting that the nation leads the globe in all of these areas. The urban labor section's unfortunate, destitute, and impoverished existence is shown in the story. They force their children to beg on the streets themselves. Heroin addict Ramachandran destroys the homes of the rich in Kittur's Rose Lane. He beats his wife physically and forces his children to beg. Nothing has changed despite being repeatedly abused and arrested. He is still the same nasty person who becomes addicted to his little daughter's money and begs at tourist attractions. Their stories tell of the brother-sister's suffering. Their father doesn't even feed them; instead, he forces the boy to go to other locations and hits him. This tale shows the immoral mindset of oppressed and impoverished individuals who will stop at nothing to further their agendas. Adiga is characterized by the evilness of a father who uses his addiction to take advantage of his children.

Conclusion

This research paper demonstrates that in his Narratives, Arvind Adiga focused exclusively on various social ills inside Indian society. His critical demonstration focuses on the violations of fundamental rights and mass freedom, such as poverty, illiteracy, and other religious, social, and political wrongs. The main theme of his works is the division of society into affluent and poor, highborn and lowborn, religious majority and minority, child labor, and the great suffering of the non-bourgeois and subaltern classes.

Adiga has described the nation's contemporary sociopolitical environment, which is marked by a great deal of injustice and evil despite its claim to be the largest democracy in the world.



According to the report, *Between the Assassinations* discusses important and pertinent issues facing India and offers solutions for resolving them. The results have shown that taking appropriate action to lessen suffering is crucial and highly contextualized.

In Adiga's spatial narrative, socio-cultural viewpoints are extended to the development of discourses on a variety of issues facing modern society. The subject of modernity, progress, and affluence has been raised by the critically examined retrogressive space that lies beneath the paces and people between the past and present. Adiga appears to challenge the postmodern material circumstances that may be used as a basis for defense. There are numerous paths that the spatialization of narratives can take in these intricate and contradicting socio-cultural contexts. The discourse that develops in this book pulls the primary story into the fields of cultural studies, anthropology, sociology, and politics. There may be further research conducted in these areas. Adiga also uses satire to comment on society, area featuring cultural and social issues.

Adiga skillfully depicts the conflict that exists in urban areas between the expanding demands of people and the burgeoning real estate industry. His spatial narratives, which are far from reportage, flourish with real-life stories of individuals, their pasts, and their consciousness in the city. In his narratives, Adiga incorporates humanistic perspectives. His dialogic style gives the story' conflictual, private, and social circumstances context. Locations, people, and collective consciousness all serve as spatial representations for polyphonic voices. The narrative presents socioeconomic, cultural, traditional, and modern landscapes with all of their symmetries and paradoxes in a realistic manner. He has drawn attention to how globalization has affected contemporary India and the tendency of Indians to accept modernity without endorsing it. Even though modernity is evident in metropolitan areas, a sizable section of India's people continues to live in abject poverty and ignorance. He draws attention to the subtle yet pervasive immoralities in Indian society. His writing is all an effort to restore equality, harmony, and sanity to society. Adiga's realistic portrayal of defective democracy, caste system, collective hypocrisy, and filthy politics sets him apart from other Indian writers writing in English.

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