

The Influence of Colonial Legacies on Socio-Political Structures in Aravind Adiga's Novel

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Abstract:

The novels of Aravind Adiga explore the sociopolitical landscape of modern-day India in great detail, emphasizing the long-lasting effects of colonial legacy. This essay examines the ways in which Adiga challenges postcolonial sociopolitical systems that were influenced by British colonialism in books like *Last Man in Tower* (2011) and *The White Tiger* (2008). Adiga looks at class inequality, corruption, and systemic inequality as lingering consequences of colonial practices and governance. Through an analysis of these themes, the study makes the case that colonial frameworks have been absorbed and maintained, impacting the socio-political ethos of contemporary India.

Keywords: Postcolonialism, colonial legacy, socio-political structures, class inequality, corruption, socio-political ethos.

1. Introduction

The socio-political and economic domains of India are still affected by the effects of British colonization. Despite India's independence in 1947, the social institutions, power structures, and governance frameworks put in place during British rule have had a lasting impact. In his novels, particularly *The White Tiger* and *Last Man in Tower*, renowned modern Indian author Aravind Adiga challenges these traditions. These pieces address the intricacies of systemic exploitation, corruption, and class inequality while providing important insights into colonialism's ongoing impact on postcolonial India's sociopolitical landscape.

Adiga's examination of the sociopolitical environment brings to light the persistent colonial systems of government that continue to favor the wealthy while denying the underprivileged their rights. This work looks at how Adiga depicts the social divisions, governmental corruption, and capitalist exploitation of contemporary India in order to critique these residual repercussions. By doing this, it highlights how colonial structures have influenced modern India's political culture by being assimilated and preserved throughout the postcolonial era.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study uses postcolonial theory, especially the writings of academics like Edward Said and Dipesh Chakrabarty, to comprehend the degree of colonial influence on the sociopolitical structures of Adiga's books. Western colonial powers established a hierarchical relationship between the colonizers and the colonized, which still has an impact on postcolonial cultures, as Said's idea of

orientalism (1978) demonstrates. Said contends in his groundbreaking book *Culture and Imperialism* that colonialism created cultural frameworks that continue to influence postcolonial identities and political structures in addition to establishing political and economic dominance.

This topic is further contextualized by Partha Chatterjee's idea of colonial modernity, which holds that the modernization initiatives started by colonial powers were frequently insufficient and intended to achieve imperial objectives. A persistent conflict between indigenous social institutions and the Westernized bureaucratic state that developed during British rule characterizes India's political and cultural legacy of colonialism, as argued by Chatterjee in *The Nation and Its Fragments* (1993).

These theoretical perspectives inform the analysis of Adiga's novels, where postcolonial India's enduring challenges are explored through characters who navigate the legacies of colonialism, particularly in terms of class and political exploitation.

3. Research Methodology

This research utilizes a qualitative, textual analysis approach to explore the themes and socio-political critiques presented in Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* and *Last Man in Tower*. The analysis will focus on the portrayal of class divisions, political corruption, and systemic inequality in these novels, seeking to identify how these issues are symptomatic of colonial legacies. A close reading of key passages from both novels will allow for a deeper understanding of how Adiga critiques the continuing influence of colonial structures.

In particular, the study examines the following:

- The portrayal of the lower classes and their relationship to the political and economic elites in postcolonial India.
- The depiction of corruption within the political system and its relation to the colonial legacy of governance.
- The role of social mobility (or the lack thereof) in both novels, highlighting the persistence of class-based stratification.

Additionally, the study considers the broader socio-political context in which Adiga's novels were written, taking into account contemporary debates surrounding the continuing influence of colonialism on global and local scales. By integrating these theoretical frameworks and research methods, this paper seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of the socio-political critiques embedded in Adiga's novels.

Analysis of Colonial Legacies in *The White Tiger* and *Last Man in Tower* ***The White Tiger: A Critique of Class, Corruption, and Mobility***

In *The White Tiger*, Balram Halwai, the novel's protagonist, is a driver who rises from the rural poverty of the Indian underclass to become a successful entrepreneur. His journey represents a critique of the postcolonial Indian state, which, despite its claims to modernity and progress, remains marred by corruption, inequality, and entrenched social hierarchies. Balram's rise to power is depicted as both a personal triumph and a moral compromise, revealing how the political and economic systems in postcolonial India force individuals to navigate corrupt structures in order to

achieve upward mobility.

The social order that Balram challenges echoes colonial-era power dynamics, where the lower classes were subjugated to serve the interests of the elite. The corruption that pervades the political system in the novel—a system in which politicians, businessmen, and law enforcement work together to maintain the status quo—can be traced back to the colonial legacy of governance, where power was centralized and wielded by a small elite class. Adiga critiques the persistence of this power imbalance and highlights the extent to which colonial practices have been internalized by both the elite and the masses.

Last Man in Tower: Class, Development, and Colonial Appropriations of Land

Last Man in Tower shifts focus to the urban setting of Mumbai, where residents of a middle-class apartment building face eviction in the name of development. Here, the political and economic forces at play are driven by real estate developers and corrupt bureaucrats, who manipulate the residents for their own gain. This dynamic reflects the colonial-era practice of land appropriation and the exploitation of local populations for profit, a legacy that continues in the form of modern-day capitalist development.

The developer's manipulation of the residents mirrors colonial practices of land control, where resources were extracted from indigenous populations to benefit the colonial enterprise. The residents' resistance to the eviction highlights the ongoing struggle between the marginalized and the powerful elite, a battle that mirrors postcolonial India's larger fight for justice and equality in the face of systemic oppression.

4. Conclusion

The *White Tiger* and *Last Man in Tower* by Aravind Adiga offer powerful analyses of the sociopolitical institutions of modern-day India, demonstrating how colonial legacies still influence the country's power structures. Adiga criticizes the continuation of colonial governance structures that continue to isolate the poor and give the rich more power by depicting political exploitation, corruption, and class inequality. These books imply that the same colonial powers that previously controlled India are still at work in postcolonial India, albeit in different forms.

Ultimately, Adiga's works underscore the enduring relevance of postcolonial theory and the need to address the ongoing effects of colonialism on modern socio-political systems. The novels serve as a reminder that, despite the end of colonial rule in 1947, its effects are still felt in modern-day India, influencing its fight for equality and social justice.

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