

THE VOICE OF SUBALTERN: IN THE NOVEL OF ARAVIND ADIGA'S THE WHITE TIGER AND ARUNDHATI ROY'S THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS

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Received: 09 Oct 2020

Accepted: 14 Oct 2020

Published: 24 Oct 2020

ABSTRACT

In choosing my title, I am inspired by an extraordinary exactly what has taken place after Aravind Adiga's protagonist in The White Tiger where he explain the situation of subaltern in our society and Arundhati Roy's voiceless people in The God of Small Things. Essay penned by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak "Can the Subaltern speak" in the 1990s. What happens if Subaltern starts to speak for their personal or social issues?

KEYWORDS: *White Tiger, Arunthathi Roy, Aravind Adiga*

INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century post colonial and post imperialist societies of South Asia and India saw the rise of a particular group of writers whose interests were mainly focussed on the exposition and representation of the marginalised or the non-elites also known as the subalterns. This narrative strategy was initially inspired by the writings of Marxist. In India, Ranajit Guha who is known for his Marxist approach propounded a working definition of "subaltern": "The word "subaltern".... stands for the meaning as given in the Concise Oxford Dictionary, that is, of inferior rank. It will be used as a name for the general attitude of subordination in South Asian Society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way."

The two Indians novelist who have won Man Booker Prize are Arundhati Roy and Aravind Adiga. Who have written their prize winning novels from the subaltern point of view? They are widely appreciated for adding new feathers to the cap of Indians literature in English but at the same time they have continuously been victims of bitter and unrelenting criticism. Both of them are accused of selling India's poverty and social customs in the western market. How can one choose only darkness of India? Only for prize! There is also bright and glorious picture of India but both of them never write about this.

Aravind Adiga's The White Tiger is the story of a village boy named Balram. The psychology of Balram is the same as the psychology of a subaltern, made clear through the method of plunging deeply into his motives and desires. The narrative takes the form of meta-narrative: Balram's story is a story about migrant workers, including and explaining other stories within its scheme. This is highly post modernist technique where the reader is caught in the eclecticism employed by the author. The feeling of suspense keeps on mounting till the final moment of peripety when the victim is none other than his own beloved master Ashok. It comes as a thrash to one's idea of probability or necessity. The narrator had been giving a quite favourable image of the victim. Balram is the symbol of a gratitude servant in India but Indian are known for gratefulness.

In *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy uses the term "subaltern" for- the woman (Ammu) the daughter of Mammachi and the untouchable (Velutha) who is the son of Mammachi's servant. Ammu and Velutha represent the Voiceless whereas those opposing their unorthodox love affair represent the starting point where Subalterns have a voice. In this novel Roy wants to justify immoral act in society is not bad like the relation of Ammu and Velutha. In this novel Roy presents a picture of physical and moral corruption is linked with the social and political corruption of Ayemenem. In *The God of Small Things* the love affair Velutha has with an upper caste woman who is his master's daughter. His real mistake is to want to rise above the station his caste permits. His success activates ancient prejudices and poses a challenge to the upper caste social forces which involuntarily form them selves into a punishing force and finally eliminate him. The work of Indian novelists is significant in making society aware of the demands of the non-elites, and in providing a medium for self-expression and, thus, re-writing the History of India. An honest discussion of the issue of subaltern and caste based discrimination on the Indian would for sure exert enough external pressure on the lawmakers and hasten the integration of the subaltern.

Taking into consideration what would happen if the subaltern were to speak, it could definitely not be a voice of the sane. Rather, a subaltern, after such long periods of subjugation, repression, appropriation and resistance can scream only as a psychopath, as he/she cannot be but on the verge of insanity. Adiga is a journalist and has travelled a lot. The idea of writing *The White Tiger* probably came to his mind when he visited Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. He discovered a new India there, migration of labour was changing their life style, traditional values and old ties of these people. His purpose is to introduce a new India to the readers, new aspects of master-servant relationship, class system and disproportion of income. The novel hints at the restlessness in the servant class which might erupt in violence. He is not continuing the traditional image of an ideal servant in his hero Balram. We may say that his narrator is an anti-hero. Adiga himself says, "*My novel attempts to look at what kind of man would be prepared to break the structure. You can in essence say it is a warning story, a fable of things that might be ahead for India.*"(rediff.com)

Arundhati's treatment of the subaltern raises a moot question about their pitiable position in society. She urges them to shatter all conventions of the traditional society if they are interested in fetching an identity for themselves. The landowners, the industrialists and the upper classes have always exercised control over the poor peasants, labourers and the working classes. This repressive and stiffening system cannot be exterminated unless the world remains divided into two strata's, the powerful and the powerless processes. Poverty, caste and class related discriminations, gender discrimination, corruption, illiteracy and consumerism are some of the issues that are so deeply rooted in society that extrication from these seems next to impossible.

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