

Conflicts In Aravind Adiga's *Between the Assassinations*.

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Abstract

The themes of postcolonial Indian English fiction are numerous. The political overtone or political Conflict was the dominant theme of pre-independence literature, whereas post-independence fiction used the 'conflict' of human life on a larger scale as the development of nation gave birth to many eccentricities, differences, and violent activities, widening the economic and social gap between man and man. Aravind Adiga, an Indian English fictionist, has minutely noted such aberrations and with creative tools presented it in such a way that the study of such conflicts (inner and outside) demands serious critical attention. The objective of this essay is to investigate conflicts in *Between the Assassination*.

Keywords: Post-colonial, Conflict, Economic, Social.

Introduction

Adiga has been following the citizens of Kittur, a city located on the southwest coast between Goa and Calicut, as they go about their daily lives. Adiga has attempted to capture "a wide economic and social spectrum" in Kittur, the microcosm of India, by telling tales in a "a brief twisty description" of the town full of cultural details suggesting that "something is profoundly wrong in India" and that everything is not as our politicians have claimed -- "India rising" or "India shining." These short stories have succeeded in removing the façade of "pseudo development" and exposing the true face of India because they are "sharp," "sardonic," and engaging. Adiga addresses the poor and the disadvantaged, primarily focusing on the struggle between the rich and the poor,

The shocking wealth and caste disparities among the characters in this book are everywhere. As correctly observed by Vikas Swarup once more, "we meet upper caste bankers and lower caste rickshaw pullers, Muslim tea boys and Christian headmasters, capitalist factory owners and communist sidekicks" here. Adiga has focused on the numerous caste-, class-, or wealth-related

issues. He continues to be the defender of the downtrodden and an ideal communicator of their suffering. According to Peter Parker, "Adiga is at his best when describing the everyday realities of village people who escape to a big city, or are sent there by their families, and end up living on the streets and doing the most menial jobs"

His characters exhibit 'The everyday frustration brought about by the discriminations of status, class and religion.' (Adams). In the book, there are a number of characters like Ziauddin, Ramakrishna, Shankara, Mr. Dimello, Rataakar Shetty, Keshva, Gururaj Kamath, Chenayya, Soumya and Raju, Jayamma, George D' Souza and Murli, who seem to be involved in their own tensions and conflicts of existence. In the first story, we see Ziauddin caught in the tension of Hindu-Muslim issue (communalism in milder vein) and poverty. In the second, we see Abbasi caught in the conflicts of corruption. Similarly, in the third, Ramakrishna has been arrested twenty-one times for the sale, at the discounted rates, of illegally photocopied or printed books on the granite pavement in front of Deshpremi Hemachandra Rao Park to the students of St. Alfonso College. (44).

In the next story, Shankara seems to have involved in caste conflict. As he is the mixed Brahmin-Hoyka student, he is presented by Adiga differently:

Shankara was always treated as someone special among his Hoyka relatives; because he was half Brahmin, and hence so much higher than them in the class seal. Swearing to himself, he kept going up the stairs. Didn't these Hoykas understand? There was nothing he hated more than their groveling to him, because of his half Brahmin. If they had been contemptuous of him, if they had forced him to crawl into their shops to expiate the sin of being a half-Brahmin, then wouldn't he have come to see them every day? (62).

Adiga has a thorough awareness of the dividing factors, languages, and even castes that contribute to widespread wrongdoing. Adiga demonstrates how various castes speak various languages while explaining the Kittur language. Kannada, the language of the upper caste, is used to create local newspapers like *The Don Herald*. Adiga says:

Although understood by virtually everyone in the town, Kannada is the mother tongue of only some of the Brahmins. Tulu, a regional language that has no written script – although is believed to have possessed a script centuries ago – is the lingua franca. Two dialects of Tulu exist. The 'upper-caste' dialect is still used by a few Brahmins, but is dying out as the Tulu-speaking Brahmins switch to Kannada. The other dialect of Tulu, a rough, bawdy language cherished for its diversity and pungency of expletives, is used by the Bunts and Hoykas- this is the language of Kittur Street. (139).

The characters like Saumya and Raju the beggar children, are on a mission of smack for their father who is drug addicted; they seem to be absorbed in another conflict existence. Similarly, a woman (spinster) who is surrounded by yellow modes of DDT takes enjoyment in deep breaths of

DDT- a strange, relaxing, powerfully addictive aroma. The woman seems much influenced by casteism and sometimes she feels herself fortunate in remaining a spinster when she says: "Sometimes I thank my stars I never married. What is I too had been deceived, like Ambika? Better a spinster than a widow, any day... And yet that little lower can't stop singing about it every minute of the morning".

The character named George D' Souza is a 'bitter man' struggling to make the proper radius between mistress and servant is one day by his friend Guru who was a Hindu 'considered deaf by his friends'. "You know what the biggest difference is, between being rich and being like us? The rich can make mistake again and again. We make only one mistake, and that's it for us". (186).

The aforementioned phrase expresses the thoughts of the poor people and mimics the conflict between the rich and the poor. While Girdhar Rao and Kamini, the childless couple, seek refuge in his circle of intimates in order to escape loneliness and avoid internal conflicts, Ratnakar Shetty, a fake sexologist on a mission to find a cure for a young boy suffering from venereal disease, is involved in a conflict involving the rescue of a young boy. In the final tale, Murli, a communist who enjoys writing about destitute individuals, struggles with both internal and external issues.

Conclusion

Thus, from the above discussion it becomes clear that the theme of conflict remains alive in each and every story of *Between the Assassinations*, and 'this new work of fiction' covers a wider spectrum of Indian society. Ed King's observation deserves mention here:

Adiga focuses on the effects of upheaval far from the centers of power, drawing his characters from across the social spectrum, from provincial factory owners to street sellers and beggar children. The stories come interspersed with excerpts from an imaginary travel guide to Kittur to confront a tourist vision of exotic India with the conflicts

and injustices that this vision
disavows.(172)

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